CAPTAIN JINKS

The Autobiography of a Shetland Pony

WORKS OF

FRANCES HODGES WHITE

CAPTAIN JINKS	$1.50
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L. C. PAGE & COMPANY

NEW ENGLAND BUILDING, BOSTON, MASS.

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(See page 27)

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Captain Jinks

The Autobiography of a Shetland Pony

BY

Frances Hodges White

Author of "Helena's Wonderland," "Aunt Nabby's Children," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

Frank Vining Smith

Boston

L. C. Page & Company

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PZ7
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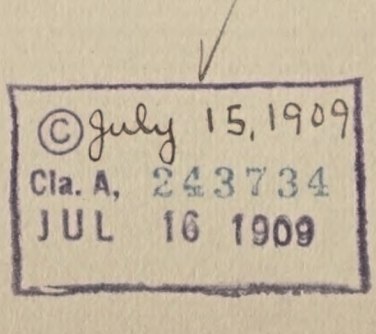
First Impression, July, 1909

Electrotyped and Printed at
THE COLONIAL PRESS:
C. H. Simonds & Co., Boston, U.S.A.



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CAPTAIN JINKS

The Autobiography of a Shetland Pony

CHAPTER I

My name is Captain Jinks, though I am only a little Shetland pony who has been asked to give the story of his life to the world. Please let me talk to you in my own language, and listen if you will, without criticism; for indeed, since you have never entered into a pony's life, or heard one speak, how can you rightly judge what thoughts have been mine, or what words I should use in which to clothe them. But here is my story.

In the Southern Wisconsin Valley, there is a farm called Helendale. Across its broad level fields, when the harvest time is near, a sea of pale golden grain, surging and blending with the fragrant clover and alfalfa blossoms, lays on the morning breeze

the sweetest odours that ever tempted a pony to jump the fence and help himself.

But in the spring, when a delicious turfy smell puts new life into a pony's heels, then the ground is covered with a soft green carpet which invites us to gallop from creek to river, from knoll to hollow, just to nibble the brightest tufts of grass.

I have said that the fields of Helendale are level, and so they are, saving that part of them at the rear of the farm house, where a gradual rise joining the pasture land, continues on and up till the summit of a great hill is reached.

If you were to stand on this hill, facing the place where the sun gets up in the morning, you would see, sparkling and winding its crooked way along the foot of a steep embankment, the waters of the Rock River.

During the heat of my first summer, it was here that most of my days were spent; where the cool clear water refreshed me, and the shade of overhanging willows protected me from the sun.

I do not know how old I was when I first began to realize my surroundings; you see many things may happen in a pony's life too early for him to remember. But I suppose I had travelled around the pasture on my wabbly legs for weeks or months before the particular day came, when I seemed to awaken as from a dream.

High on the crest of the hill overlooking the river, there stands a low wooden shed that in days gone by was used for a summer camp; but which has since served the purpose of shelter, for horses in the pasture. Above this shed, stretching out its giant arms, and tapping softly on the roof with its green branches, there stands a tree large enough to be grandfather to all the western willows. It was one of my early fancies that this great old tree had grown here to take care of the shed, just as the shed cared for me—by keeping me warm and dry when it stormed.

Often on summer days when the sun looked down with hot eyes, burning me so there was no comfort playing in the open,

I was glad to creep into the cool dark shed, where I usually fell asleep.

On one of these days I must have slept long and soundly, for it was late in the afternoon when voices outside my door awakened me. I had never understood speech before, but now for some unaccountable reason, the meaning of every word was clear. I knew also that the words were spoken by Razzle and Dazzle, two ponies who were often turned into my pasture, for days at a time. It was Dazzle speaking first:

"I wonder where Captain Jinks is? He hasn't shown himself since we came today. I don't think he seems overjoyed to see us, do you?" Then I recognized Razzle's gentle voice saying:

"Cap is young you must remember, perhaps he is back in the pasture sleeping, and does not know we are here."

"Well, I am glad you can find excuses for him, he needs them! I wonder if his legs will ever stop growing? I think he is the most awkward animal I ever saw!

Strange, too, that he should be so, when his mother was such a beauty."

The voices ceased and I heard the ponies cropping the grass back of the shed, while I lay quivering and trying to understand the strange emotions they had stirred within me. So far as I knew I had never before heard the name of Captain Jinks, yet I was sure now that it referred to me. Then again, though I had neither knowledge nor memory of my mother, the word had stirred a longing not easily soothed. I began to realize then for the first time, what I had lost by never having known my mother. But Dazzle was talking and I must listen:

"I wonder why Uncle Toby ever sold old Jess, do you know?"

"I think he sold her because he could not afford to keep her. You see she was the finest Shetland in Wisconsin to look at, and when Captain Jinks was a baby, she brought Uncle Toby a sum of money so large that he felt obliged to let her go."

"Well, it is a pity he had to sell her,

because this long-legged Jinks needs her badly enough for an example. But we will forgive his looks if he will only try to be better natured than his mother was."

I have since been told that some persons believe animals have neither soul nor reasoning powers. When we do a thing which attracts their attention to any train of thought on our part, they call it instinct. But what is instinct, I would like to ask? If it is the great power God has given us of knowing things we have never seen, things no one has ever spoken to us; and knowing them for a certainty, till our hearts quake with fear at the approach of unseen danger, or sing while we gallop away over field and pasture, just for the simple joy of living; then it seems to me that instinct is more precious than common thinking—for by instinct we know, and by thought we only think.

So, even though the process of instinct was now being born within me, it was by instinct that I realized what the word, mother, meant; and it was instinct also

causing me to feel so hot and trembling over Dazzle's last remark. I believe while a pony is small and yearning for his mother's care, that he resents any bad thing said against her quite as much as a man would, if it were said about his mother. Then there was something in the way Dazzle said "Jinks," that made my blood leap through my veins. For some other voice had spoken the name to me in such a gentle loving tone, that I could not bear to hear it, save in the old familiar way. Yet I did not know where I had heard the name, or by whom it had been spoken.

But I was angry now, so galloping fast around the shed with my head and tail in the air, I gave the crossest neigh I could possibly make, and stopped short in front of Dazzle, saying:

"Well, you see I am here after all, and I heard every word you said! It seems to me you are rather familiar on short acquaintance, saying unkind things of my mother, and calling me 'Jinks.' That is a name no one has ever spoken, excepting

the kind voice that sometimes comes to me, and I love so much to hear. I wish you would be more careful next time you talk about your betters."

At this Dazzle laughed scornfully and replied:

"It has often been said that listeners never hear any good of themselves. So in the future please bear in mind that you have proven the truth of the saying—and don't listen!"

While he was speaking, Razzle came forward, and laying her face against mine, she said lovingly:

"I am very sorry to have hurt you, Cappie. We did not know you were near. But if you will forgive us, I will promise it shall never happen again."

Then somehow all the anger went out of me, and I became as happy as I had been miserable. There was too much love and gentleness in Razzle, for even the crossest pony to resist.

Razzle and Dazzle were brother and sister, and though I did not then know it,

they shared the same famous Shetland father with me. But their mother had Mustang blood in her, so they were much larger than I could ever be.

Besides our father, there was another mutual blessing which we prized far more, and this was our beloved master, Uncle Toby. I did not know him at first, but while Razzle continued to lay her head lovingly against mine, she closed her eyes as though the act of kindness made her happy, and said:

"You have not yet seen Uncle Toby, have you? He came out to visit the children, and to give us a breath of freedom in the pasture. You know there is no place in town where we can run."

It all grew clear to me while she was speaking. That big gentle presence who had petted and patted me from time to time, together with the voice which had said "Jinks" in such a kind way, made a master. That master was Uncle Toby, and he belonged to Razzle and Dazzle and me.

Razzle was a stone-grey pony, two-thirds as large as a horse; and the soft white spots that had been left all over her, looked like bits of fleece which the lambs hang on the bare bushes in the fall. Her tail was long and matched the creamy spots, just as did the thick mane, that waved over her eyes, and hung all about her neck.

Her body was round and prettily curved, her hoofs small and so delicately tinted, that they always reminded me of the shells my little mistress used to make her mud pies in. But beautiful as her body was it was her face which one most wanted to look at. I wonder why I forgot everything but her eyes when once I looked into them?

They had nothing of the vicious Mustang glance, but were soft and large and loving, and every time she turned her head, a ray of gold shot through the dark of them. In after years when I lived by the sea, I have seen the sun light a dark wave, just as those spots lighted Razzle's eyes,

—only the eyes always warmed my heart, while the waves made it cold. She had inherited her short pretty face from her Shetland blood, and her curved nostrils were so proudly distended, that one knew at a glance she was too high bred, and yet too gentle for any wicked act.

As for Dazzle, he was grey like Razzle, with the same woolly spots, only the grey was greyer, and the spots more woolly, and his coat so fine he shone like silk. His face was longer, his eyes smaller, and without the gold lights, and his mane and tail not nearly so long or waving. Yet they were a fairly matched pair, and looked as much alike as it was possible for glass to look like a diamond. For one was false, and the other true.

CHAPTER II

Of what followed on the day just described, I cannot remember, for I grew tired after a while, and leaving Razzle and Dazzle grazing by the river, I returned to the shed where I slept till the loud clucking of a hen, whose brood had wandered beyond the pasture fence, told me that, if she were putting her babies to bed, it was time for me to be thinking about the nice, bran supper, which the kind presence always brought to me, when near.

I was standing under the willow, wondering what it would seem like to see my master again, now that I knew who he was, when I saw him coming across the pasture towards me. I was so full of joy and curiosity, that I cantered away to meet him as fast as I could go; and when I had eaten the welcome supper, I looked

into his face and laid my head on his arm. Yes, this was Uncle Toby! The same kind face, the same great warm hand, as patting my flanks and running his fingers through my mane he said:

"Why, Jinks, you really are getting a mane and tail. I wouldn't wonder if you'd be quite a critter after all!"

What delight for a pony, after the doubtful compliments from Dazzle. "Quite a critter after all!" Then as he spoke, I looked up at his face long and gratefully, and something passed into my life that has never wholly passed out again:—an undying faith in man, a sweet trust that God had committed me to his care, to serve him as best I could, and to love him.

It was an untold blessing for a pony to have his first conscious hours filled with thoughts of a master like mine. I remember just how he looked at me in that soft spring twilight. We were alone, for the sheep, afraid of being penned, had scampered away to the grove at his approach; and the mother-hen, brooding where she

had stood, hid every fluffy chicken from our sight. Razzle and Dazzle both neighed loudly at sound of the master's voice, but they kept to their grazing; and then just as my heart was beating faster and faster, though I knew not why, and my very muscles were quivering with joy, a moment of silence seemed to fall over the world, and in that moment I began to live.

A great hawk swooped down from somewhere out of the sky, with the hungry cry of "chicken, chicken," which the mother-hen answered by a terrified squawk; and a bird in a low branch of the big willow sent out a lonely call that sounded like "Phoebe;" and I wondered how all these unhappy things existed in such a world of brightness, for was not the master here, and could not he make all their troubles right?

Then as I continued to look at him, and to wonder, I suddenly began to realize that he was very tall, so tall that his head came to the eaves of our shed, and all over his

face there was a glow, which I thought then was reflected from the place the sun had left in the sky, when he said good-night. But I was mistaken, for after this, on many a rainy day, when it was so dark the sun forgot to get up, Uncle Toby's face brought light whenever he came to see us. Perhaps you will better understand how he looked if I tell you that I once heard a stranger say as he watched him out of sight:

"Uncle Toby looks just as I think an old general should, erect, commanding, and at the same time so big-hearted that never a soldier would fear to approach him."

When I noticed the same gentle look in his blue eyes that I had seen in Razzle's, I could not help wondering if love and kindness were catching, for if they were I meant to try very hard to get them. I have learned since that they are, and when we are surrounded by them, we never have to try to catch them, for they come to us before we realize it. Though when we are not exposed to them, it is

quite different, for try as hard as we may, sometimes, they will not come near us.

Besides the love in Uncle Toby's eyes, there was another thing which I think must have been a laugh, for whenever he smiled, which was often, that twinkling brightness grew brighter, till it seemed to dance out of his eyes, and get into everything, and everybody around him. Even his stubbed grey hair, that stood straight like quills on top of his head, had yielded at one point, where a stray lock seemed to have jumped the bars, and sprawling limp but happily down over his forehead, pointed the way to the funny, drooping lines of his mouth, and the merry twinkle in his eyes.

It took me a long time to realize all these things about my master, and I tell them to you because I want you to see how perfect he was to me, and why he had such a peaceful influence over us all. I learned afterward that he lived in town, where he kept Razzle and Dazzle for his own use;

but his sheep and cattle lived at Helendale, which was his, too.

When the light had faded from the sky and Uncle Toby could be seen no more, I stood still for some time, watching the door of the little farm house, which had shut him away from us. I don't know just why I did this, but I seemed rooted to the spot; and a feeling of loneliness came over me, mingled with a sneaking hope that the door might open again and let Uncle Toby out with another dish of bran. But that door had not one spark of sympathy for a poor little pony, shut out into the night. It just kept on showing me its dark red panels, till all hope of bran died from my heart, and only the loneliness was left. Then suddenly Razzle whinnied loudly from across the pasture, and told me it was time that all small ponies were asleep.

I must have slept late the next morning, for when I awoke, the ripples on the river danced in sunlight that seemed to come from overhead. I could see them through the door, and just as I began to think what

a lazy pony I was, and of how many morning pleasures I had missed, I heard a sound as of some one brushing against the outer wall of my shed. I looked in the direction whence it came, and I saw a big blue eye peeping through a knot-hole in a board. It was so low down that I thought it either belonged to a very little man, or else he was stooping to meet the hole.

But I had not long to wonder, for when the eye saw me looking at it, it took itself away, and then there followed such a scurrying of feet that I imagined the sheep were coming back to the river to drink. But no, for just as I stepped out of the shed, the dearest, tiniest man ran up to me and threw both arms around my neck, kissing my face all over, and hugging me till I could hardly breathe.

At first I did not know whether to be glad or mad; but presently he gave me a chance to get a breath, and then I saw him. After this there was never a question in my mind of madness or gladness,

for wherever he was, there I found my greatest joy.

Like the master he proved to be no stranger to me, for I had often seen him without realizing who he was. But I knew now that he was Boo, a very dear little boy, who called Uncle Toby "Grandfather."

The years gone by since that day, have brought many changes to Boo and me, but I would gladly give all my remaining days, to see him again as he looked on that bright summer morning, with the sun shining on his long curls, which were just the colour of the mother-hen's fluffy babies; only a hundred times finer, and more glossy. He wore no cap, and his feet and legs were bare, as also were his little brown arms and neck; for his blue blouse had neither collar nor sleeves, and the only purpose it seemed to serve was to keep the sun from his shoulders, and to match his eyes, that were like the river, and the sky, at noon,—and reminded me of the sweet berries I loved to eat from the bushes,

back in the pasture: they were so soft to look into, with such deep dark lights behind the paler blue. There was the same laugh in his eyes that danced out of Uncle Toby's, and already it was getting into me, for I began to kick up my heels, just to let him see I was spoiling for a frolic.

Boo had inherited the stately head and shoulders from his grandfather, and when he stood watching my antics now, he looked like a little general, though he could not deceive me with his soldier's airs. I knew there was something simmering inside him that constantly bubbled over, keeping him busy every minute with a new piece of mischief, and that he would not watch me very long without joining in the play.

What happened afterward proved I was not wrong, for he seemed to make up his mind suddenly, as to what should bubble over next, when, after rolling his big eyes around, to see that no one was near, he whispered in my ear:

"Come on, Cap, let's go down to the river and have some fun."

I needed no second invitation, especially as I was thirsty and hungry. The grass was always extra sweet, and tender, by the river, so when Boo gathered up my forelock in his little hands, we galloped helter-skelter down the bank, where he led the way to a fallen tree by the water's edge. I was glad when he let go of my mane, for I had been so afraid of stepping on his tiny, mud-stained toes.

But now I was free again, and after taking a drink from the cool, clear water, I fell to nibbling the grass, while Boo played by himself, throwing sticks and pebbles into the river, and building forts in the sand. Sometimes I stopped feeding to watch the sunshine in his hair, or the soft pink, that broke through the tan on his cheeks—and oh! how I loved him.

It seems to me I have always loved beautiful persons, more than plain ones. Why, master has often told me it wasn't my fault because I was handsome, but I

must try to live up to my looks, by making my life mate my beauty. So it seems to me a handsome man or woman must feel, and this is why it is easier to love them. I think I have never known an animal who did not love beauty just as I do, till some sweet face has deceived him.

But Boo and I were thinking little about beauty to-day, for he was too busy with his play, while I could scarcely get beyond the thought of how much I loved him, and Uncle Toby, and of how many happy things were coming into my life the last few hours. Just as I had finished my breakfast, and was wondering if I had better join Boo at the river, I became conscious that the soft splashing of pebbles in the water had ceased, and I saw he was coming up the bank towards me. A new mischief had begun to simmer, and he wanted a partner, so throwing his arms around my neck, and springing up till his feet, clearing the ground, brought his whole weight upon me, he whispered in my ear:

"Say Cap, let's you and me get into

the brook. Ma doesn't allow me to, but it's fun," and then he led me back to the water's edge.

A dead limb of the fallen tree, heavy with moss, and broken bark, was stretching a grey arm far out over the river, and on this I saw Boo trying to climb. The holes in his cheeks were growing deeper, and the dark in his eyes was so bright it covered all the light, as, balancing himself on the limb, he turned to me and said:

"Oh! Cap, I feel so movey in here," putting his hand over the lower part of his little blue blouse, "and I guess it's just the happiness of playing in the water."

He had scarcely finished the words when the limb under his feet began to tip and tremble, and that strange thing we have called "instinct" began to tremble in me. What was happening? I could not tell, yet I was filled with a fear which presently became so strong, that I ran half way up the bank, neighing as loudly as ever I could, but there was no reply. Scarcely

knowing what I did, I ran back again, just in time to see the dead limb quiver and bend, till it broke with a horrible crash and fell into the river, bearing my little master with it. I saw the bright ripples part, showing a deep dark hole underneath, and into this, with a scream of terror, Boo's shining head disappeared. Then some great black rings that floated rapidly away from the hole, stopped floating, and the sunbeams began to dance over it again, and Boo was gone.

It was then I first learned to know the fear which has never wholly left me since, and against which I have struggled all my life. I was too frightened to think or move. But before I could have turned around, or even decided what to do, a great black and white animal came tearing down the hill, and with a wild bark plunged into the water, and was swallowed down in exactly the same hole that had taken Boo.

Now surely a double sorrow had come to Uncle Toby, for somehow I realized this

was Billy, his favourite dog, and that water could drown. But no, for I had time to think just this much, when there was a sound of splashing and spluttering, and I saw to my great joy that Billy was pulling Boo ashore. Before I could wink hardly, they were both beside me on the sand.

Boo looked white and frightened, but the water did not even hurt him, the rescue had been so quick. I tried to get near and comfort him, but Billy was lapping the water from his hair and face, and Boo was laughing through his tears.

Then when another great love came thrilling through my heart I knew it was for Billy. How could I help it?

CHAPTER III

After Billy saw that Boo was not hurt, but was laughing at his troubles, he suddenly remembered that his own work was not done. It was as if he knew that Boo's clothes were clinging to him heavy and wet, and there was danger of his taking cold; for after coming close to me and shaking himself violently, till the water from his long hair spattered all over my white coat, he looked into my face with a half smile and said:

"I beg your pardon, I forgot you are careful of your clean dress, I was only thinking of Boo. I must get Buntie down here to him somehow," then he ran toward the house barking madly all the way.

He had said: "I must get Buntie down to him." Now who was she and had I

seen her? Why surely, she was the little mistress who was always making mud pies by the river, and leaving them in pale tinted shells to be baked by the sun.

Here she was now, following Billy across the pasture at breakneck speed, for he had made her understand something was wrong. I think she had not seen me recently, for she paused just a minute to look at me, saying as she did so:

"You've grown perfectly beautiful, Cap, while I've been gone."

Then she saw Boo on the sand, with his wet hair hanging in his eyes, and Billy kept running from one to the other, and barking, till she stooped to gather her baby brother in her arms. She looked down upon him with such a little-mother smile, never seeming to fear his wet clothes would soil her pretty white dress, and he looked so foolish and bedraggled, that I shall not soon forget the picture. Buntie's hair was hanging below her waist in heavy dark waves, and her hat, hung from her neck by a ribbon, was covered

with great red poppies like those by the farm house door; and some of them had their eyes half shut, just as I have noticed they often do, when it gets dark at night.

But Buntie's eyes were not half shut, indeed they were very wide awake, and as she glanced up to me, I was sure that they had borrowed a bit of the blue from Boo's eyes, and some of the brightest brown from Razzle's, and mixed them together, and it all depended upon how you looked at her, which colour you saw the most of. I have given up long ago, trying to decide just how she got those eyes, for I have never seen another pair like them. And now as she sat there cuddling Boo, looking down upon him, the long black lashes that brushed the dark lines under her eyes, seemed to shade them darker still, making her pale face look very delicate, beside the red tan of his.

She was all tenderness at first, till she saw how wet Billy's hair was, when she seemed to conclude they had been playing

in the water together. Then she said loudly:

"Go away, Billy, you are a naughty dog. No doubt you teased Boo to throw sticks in the river, for you to run after."

Poor Billy crouched at her feet, looking up at her with the saddest eyes I had ever seen. Oh! if only I could have spoken then,—it seemed so cruel to scold him for his brave deed.

But Boo, after swallowing something that seemed to choke him, came to the rescue, by throwing his arms around Billy's neck, and crying out:

"Please, Sister, don't be cross to him. He is wet because he pulled me out of the river, from away over beyond the big limb."

The sudden changing of Buntie's face was a wonder to me. First it grew paler, and then it got red, as she clung to Billy, hugging and kissing him. Then Boo was talking fast and loud, and Billy was barking happily, when they all passed into the house, leaving me once more standing out

alone, with that old red door closed between us.

I stood watching it for a while with a very disagreeable feeling moving inside me. I think it must have been a hate thought, for I have noticed since, that it never comes to me without leaving me like an old horse, that had worked till his legs, all quivering under him, were scarcely able to hold him up. I believe hate thoughts make me feel weaker than being afraid, and Razzle says I must not let them get into me.

However this may be, after Buntie closed that door in my face, I hated it, till something came floating out through the open window, driving away the hate, and making me draw long breaths through my nostrils, with my eyes closed. It seemed as if I never could get filled with that smell, it made me so hungry. But now, oh joy! I saw that hateful door opening, and Buntie's mother placing a bright tin dish just inside it on a table, and I heard her say:

"You may have a doughnut, Boo, as soon as they are cooled; but you don't deserve one, for I have told you over and again to keep away from the river."

"You may have a doughnut." The words were like the song of birds in my ears, for I knew they had something to do with that delicious smell. So I walked very quietly up to the door, and when I pushed my nose against it, I was delighted to find that it swung wide open, and I could climb on the upper step with my fore feet. Yes, sure enough, there they were, those pretty round somethings, that were filled in the middle with little round nothings, and I put my nose as close to them as I dared.

Now all my life I have been thankful for what happened at this my first temptation. For when I would have taken a doughnut in my mouth, my old friend "instinct" bobbed up to me and said:

"Cap, you'll never be trusted if you steal. Ask for it, if you want it."

After that I whinnied in a soft coaxing

voice, and Uncle Toby opened the inside door. I shall never forget how he laughed, when he saw me looking so longingly at the pan of doughnuts. He gave me one to taste, and the taste was better than the smell.

This was the beginning of my visits to the house. Every morning now, I got even with that cruel door, by pushing it back with a bang, when I would step into the hall, and ask for the breakfast which I knew was always waiting for me.

Uncle Toby stayed several days at the farm this time, and I heard him say to Buntie's mother:

"I've watched Cap pretty closely since I've been here, and it seems to me he knows more than other ponies of his age, and he's growing to be a beauty. Blood tells, and he is so intelligent I believe we can make a trick pony out of him. I'm going to try at any rate."

Now what was a trick pony? I had not the slightest idea, but the tone of his

voice told me it was something nice, and quite rare, so I began to arch my neck and feel exactly as the rooster looked, that was flapping his wings, and crowing on the fence in front of me.

After these exciting days in which I had become acquainted with my family and myself, life flowed on very quietly at the farm. Much of the time Billy and I played together, or I was alone with the sheep in the pasture, saving the days when Uncle Toby came to visit, and turned Razzle and Dazzle out with me.

Dazzle rarely had much to say to me, unless it was to tease and try my temper, by biting or kicking me. He always said that he kicked, simply because he had an overflow of spirits, which having flowed into him, had to find an outlet for themselves somewhere. But after a time I began to distrust his spirits, for they never seemed to require an outlet unless I stood within close range of his heels.

I have said that love and kindness are

catching, and I think they are, though there are exceptions to this rule, as to all others. Dazzle was ever under the influence of Razzle's love, and she plead with him to be kind and gentle, but her pleading was nearly in vain, for though I think he would have been much uglier, had it not been for her, yet he had the misfortune of being born bad, and of glorying in it, just as I have known some men to do. But his wickedness only served to make Razzle seem more tender and dear by contrast, and I was always happy when she was near. I can look back over my life and see how much I owe her, for her good example, and how really vicious I might have become, in the trying hours endured, had it not been for her lessons of love.

Buntie and Boo lived alone with their mother on the farm, in the summer season, for their father's business called him far away, and they were happier in his absence, to be among the birds, and trees, where the children could run unrestrained.

We were very glad it was so, for we loved to have them near us. How often on those summer mornings, soon after I had crept out of my shed, I would look across the pasture and spy a happy little party coming towards me, waving their hands and calling. Billy and Buntie and Boo; and Boo would always have a piece of candy, or a lump of sugar in his pocket, which he would slyly put into my mouth, and then proceed to lead me away by my mane, everywhere, anywhere, that his fancy dictated. Sometimes it was to picnic by the river, or a trip further into the pasture, to pick berries or gather wild flowers, when he and Buntie would twine wreaths in my mane, and feed me dainties from their own lunch-baskets; while Billy barked at my heels in sheer delight, at being one of the party.

What wonder that my colt-hood was one long summer day, in which it was very easy to drink in Razzle's teachings of gentleness and love, and to grow strong and beautiful, as my master assured me

I was doing, every time he came to see me. It seems like a sunny dream to look back upon, and one from which the awakening came all too soon.

CHAPTER IV

These joyous summer days passed so rapidly, I did not realize they were gone, till I began to remember them, and try to keep warm by living them over again in my mind. But even such happy memories could not warm me, for the wind blew hard and cold from the river, whipping my mane about my face till it hurt me, and switching my tail around as if it had an exclusive right to my belongings, and I had nothing whatever to say about them! There were no ripples dancing on the river now, for it was cold and still, saving one black hole which was kept open for us to drink from. Then one day after all the merry leaves had stopped rustling among the trees, and the wind had scurried them away in heaps, down the frozen river, there came something new, which I had never seen before.

The sun had been kept in for several days, and I was just wondering why, when suddenly the air grew so thick I could scarcely find the way back to my shed; and there began to fall all over me, tiny white things, that seemed to melt away the moment they touched me, as if they were afraid. They danced and swirled into every place, and when I tried to look up at them, they jumped into my eyes, and ran away so fast that I couldn't see them at all.

These were lonely days, for Buntie and Boo were in town, and there was no one left to keep me company, but Billy and the farmer. The cattle were turned into fields and pastures, and we ran like wild animals through the cold winter, all but the sheep and I, who had the shed for shelter, and were given salt and food whenever we needed them.

But one fair day I awoke, and the birds had come back to the willows, the ripples had taken to dancing again on the water, and when I looked across the field, Buntie

and Boo were running towards me, with Billy barking at their heels. Then life grew merry again, and it was summer,—till the cold days came back—and then another spring—when I was two years old! These two years had been uneventful, so I have passed them over rapidly; but now Uncle Toby said I was old enough to harness and break. I must be taught some tricks too, he said, for he was sure I would learn them easily.

It was not long after this, when I was playing in the yard with the children, that I heard the sound of carriage wheels, and Uncle Toby drove up, with a merry "good morning," and a friendly neigh from Razzle. He usually rode in a surrey, with the running gear cut down, so it would not look too tall for Razzle and Dazzle, and this morning he had a tiny two-wheeled cart, tied on behind the surrey. It was just the colour of the oak leaves, when they are lying on the ground in the fall, and there was a harness of the same colour, on the seat, though it was trimmed with bits

of bright leather, like the red maple leaves, and looked very pretty to me.

When the children ran to meet their grandfather, he tossed Boo up on one of his shoulders, and threw an arm around Buntie, saying to her:

"Do you see what I have brought to Cap? A cart and harness! and Buntie dear, after he has learned to use them, if you are a good little girl, they shall all belong to you."

Up to this time, no one had ever been allowed to get on my back, but now Uncle Toby lifted Buntie up, and before I realized what was happening, I felt her soft arms clinging around my neck. She was not heavy, and I was glad when I heard Uncle Toby say that I had a splendid seat, just big enough for her. Buntie laughed happily, but she still clung to me as though afraid, till her grandfather said:

"Sit up, Buntie, Jinks will not hurt you, for he is like his mother, and has not one vicious trait!"

How this filled my heart with pride.

Not for worlds would I injure my little mistress now, for I knew the master trusted me; then too, I was very happy to hear him speak so well of my mother, after the slighting remarks which Dazzle had made concerning her.

It seemed then, that my mother was sweet and kind, as Razzle, and if this were true, I would be like her. So when Uncle Toby chirruped to me and said: "Go on Cap," I began to walk ever so gently around the yard. After a little, Buntie seemed to feel that I was a friend to her, and she sat very straight, just holding a lock of my mane in her hands.

Presently Uncle Toby hit me lightly on my flank with the little whip he had taken from the cart, and I understood he wanted me to go faster, so I cantered away as gently as I could, across the yard, with Uncle Toby trotting by my head. This was a delight, for already I had learned that it made me feel very strong and gay, when I could make the people around me laugh; and my heart rose up so high, that

it felt as if it would come out of me, though it did not.

Razzle was looking over the fence, and there was something so proud in her eyes when she watched me, that I grew happier still! But a pony cannot learn his lessons all at once, any more than a boy can, as I found out before that morning was over.

All this time while Buntie was taking her first riding lesson, Boo was standing by the blue pump, in the back yard. I noticed that his eyes were brighter than usual, and that they followed us every where we went; his cheeks were blazing red too, and his lips pouted out so far, that his little nose looked exactly as if it had been stuck on top of them, to try to hold them down—but couldn't! He did not speak, and he looked so strange that I wanted to ask him what ailed him, only he wouldn't understand me. Just then Buntie saw him, and I heard her say:

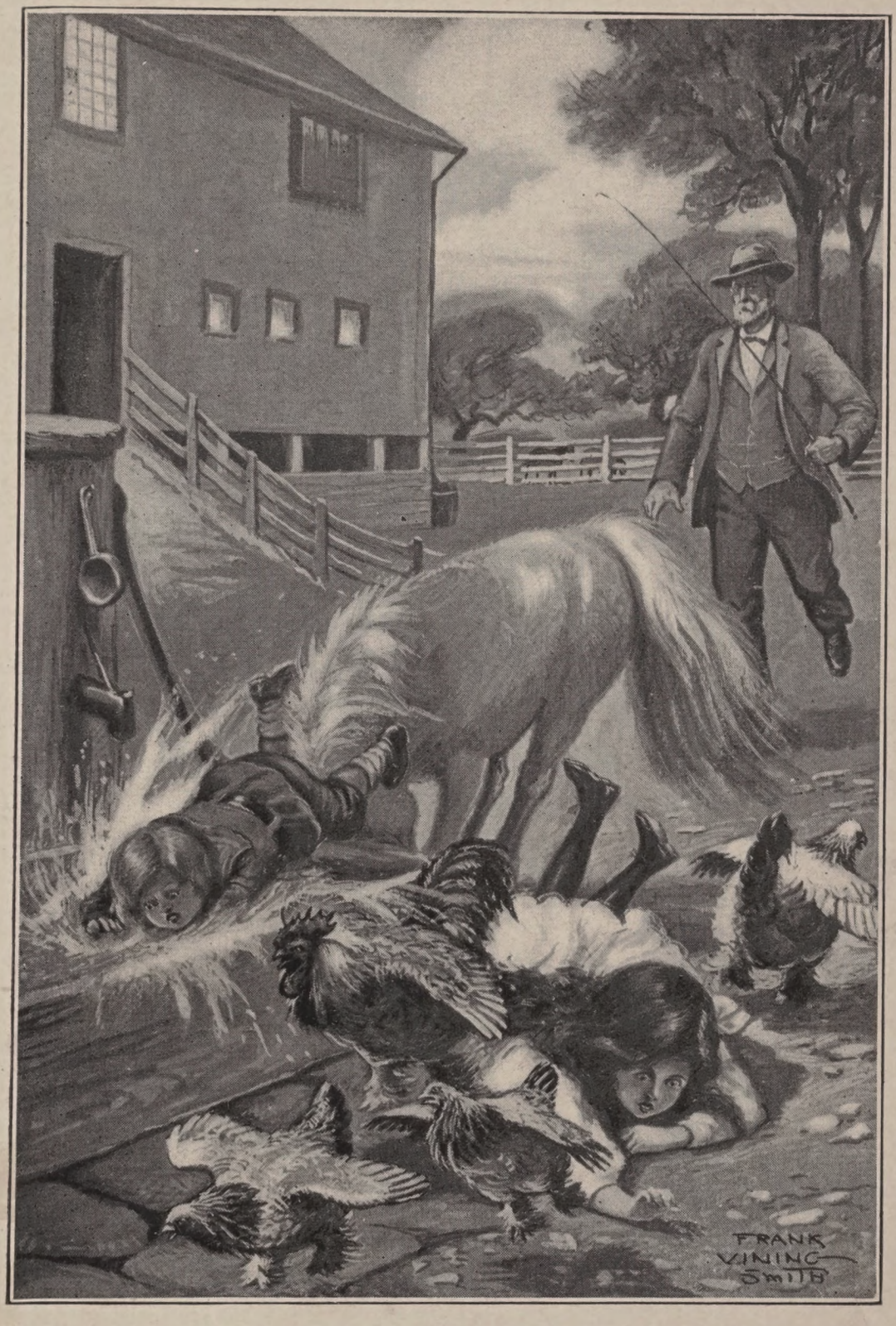
"O Grandpa, poor Boo wants to get up too. Please let him,"—and then Boo was lifted on my back in front of Buntie.

Now this was all very well, and I trotted around happily, till the heels of Boo's shoes, which were full of nails, began sticking into my neck like pins. They hurt me so that I jumped and went faster, hoping to run away from them. This pleased him, and he giggled and jabbed them into me again. Uncle Toby saw him the last time, and reached out to lift him down, but he was too late.

Now I would like to ask how any pony two years old, could know just what to do under such trying circumstances? I am willing to own I did not, and that I forgot everything but my one desire to get those nails out of my flesh. I reared and ran back, till I walked on my tail and nearly fell, and then something whispered in my ear, "If you want to throw him, put your nose on the ground suddenly." I recognized the voice of instinct, and obeyed it too, for I instantly wheeled around and bolted toward the barn. But when I reached the pump I stopped short, and lowering my head, I sent poor Boo

flying over it, splash into the watering trough, while Buntie sprawled face down in the midst of a flock of hens, each of which was trying so hard to get out of the way that she got exactly in it. Both children screamed so loudly, I thought they must be hurt, though they were not; and Uncle Toby told them they couldn't have made more fuss about it, if they had been killed.

But this was not all, for I had Razzle to deal with, after I was put in the pasture. She gave me my first real hard scolding, telling me she was no longer proud of me, and that I had acted in a shameful manner, for a pony who was old enough to be harnessed. She asked me where my love for the children had gone, that I could be so forgetful of their safety. And she said after this, when they were driving or riding, I should carry them in my steadiest gait, and if anything ever frightened me, I was to think so much of their safety, that it would make me forget my own fear.



"I SENT POOR BOO FLYING OVER IT, SPLASH INTO THE WATERING TROUGH."

I never remember feeling so foolish in my life, and if I had been Billy, I am sure I should have folded my tail away between my legs and passed out of sight.

All that afternoon there was a new voice talking to me. It was not like instinct, and I firmly believe if it had been inside of a man he would have said that he was thinking, and would have recognized the thing that pricked so sharply, as conscience. But horses are not supposed to think, so I will call it the new voice.

Be this as it may, the new voice spoke very loudly to me, and made me feel so droopy and tired, that I do not believe I ran across the pasture once. It said I had done wrong, and seemed to approve of everything Razzle had told me. Then just as I was deciding I would never be so wicked again, Dazzle came galloping up to me and said:

"Good boy, Cap. Served him right. Keep it up. I didn't think you had oats enough to do anything so smart."

But Razzle drove him away, and told

me not to listen to him, for he was tempting me to do what I knew was wrong.

Now here was another voice stirring inside me, and suddenly I began to laugh, when I thought of Boo in the watering trough, and the way he howled; and for a minute I felt as if I had done something very smart, and would like to play it all over again. But Razzle said it was only the voice of the tempter, and I must never listen to it.

So after a long struggle, when the light was out in the farm-house windows, and there was nothing in all the world to be heard, but the sound of the frogs, singing in the creek just below the house, I went to sleep with a sweet peace all through me. I had decided never to run again with Buntie or Boo, and never again to listen to that other voice, that Razzle said belonged to the tempter. How I kept my promise you shall see!

CHAPTER V

After this a great change came into my life, for Uncle Toby began to break me to the harness. You remember how he filled me with faith and love when I first saw him? Well, my feeling for him never changed. But I am sure that had I loved him any the less, I should have bitten him when he thrust that cold thing he called a bit between my teeth. It would be very hard to make you understand how it felt. Why, my mouth ached, and my heart too, because it hurt me so to think my master would be willing to make me suffer such pain.

Yet Razzle and Dazzle wore the bridle, and Razzle took her bit so gently every day, that I soon began to see it must be right, and tried to follow her example. But it was a long time before I could find

any room for my tongue, with that hard iron in my mouth. Though I finally learned it gave me less pain, if I turned at once, the same way my head was pulled by the rein.

After I had been driven around the yard with Buntie on my back, till I had learned to go just where she would have me, Uncle Toby harnessed me into the cart. Perhaps I was not proud then, for it made me think I was grown up like Razzle!

But oh! I can never forget how stiff and tight I felt, buckled into all those straps, nor how much I wanted to break away and run, when he kept pulling them tighter and tighter. But I didn't, for the new voice was still with me.

When my harness was fitted, and I drew the cart to the back door, my master, still holding the reins, stood off and looked at me. I thought he seemed pleased, and presently I knew he was, for he said:

"Cap, you are the prettiest creature in the town, not one can hold a candle

to you." And then as Buntie came running out, he added:

"You ought to be proud of this little rig, for there is not another pony or cart in the country that can touch it. I believe Jinks is the most perfect piece of pony flesh in harness. He is handsomer than his mother was. Why, Buntie, he has the cleanest white coat, the roundest most perfect body, and the heaviest, longest mane and tail I ever saw. Just look here and see how pink his nostrils are, and how blue his eyes. I tell you what, it isn't every little girl who has a blue-eyed pony. Did you know he has what is called watch eyes? Some do not like them, but I do."

Now how could I ever again possess the meek and lowly spirit, which Razzle says a pony must feel, if he would be happy? Why, really, I have been struggling ever since, to look humble; and there is nothing which helps me so much to be so, as to remember that I did not have any share in making myself.

Before the summer was over, Buntie and Boo were driving me everywhere. They had no fear of me, though I always heard their mother tell them to keep away from railroad trains, and in this they obeyed her. I often carried them to town, and sometimes it took a whole forenoon to go and come; for Buntie's hand was light on the rein, and I dearly loved to pick my way in the soft grass by the roadside, nibbling as I went.

One day there had been a gentle rain falling all the morning, and when we were driving home in the afternoon, the grass was so sweet I could not resist it, and the clover, too, was in full bloom. If you know what Wisconsin clover is, then you know that it makes a pony's nostrils quiver with delight, and brings back to his mind all the beautiful things he ever heard or dreamed of.

Well, Buntie chirruped and pulled on the reins, and Boo threw little stones at me; and once—only once, did the whip come down, crack on my back! There was

a dewy bunch of clover just ahead, and when I jumped, I bit it off, intending to trot on while I ate it; but it was so sweet I forgot to go, and then the brightest patch of grass I had seen was just ahead, and I stopped to nibble this, till before I knew it the sun had gone to bed, and Boo began to cry. The farm seemed very far away, and it seemed to me as though we might stay here all night, when something came leaping over the fence, and charged full at my heels. It was Billy, and he gave me an urgent invitation to move on, that I scarcely dared to disobey.

There was no more grass by the roadside that trip, for if I even tried to take a nibble, Billy tried the same thing on my heels. I don't think he enjoyed his bite, half as much as I did mine, but he knew it was night, and the children ought to be at home.

I believe that all through this story of my life, I have made it quite plain to you, that ponies would like to be allowed to think. And if you could have lived with

Razzle as I did, I am sure you would never again doubt that horses know what they want, and try to get it; or that we understand what is wanted of us, if our masters are good, kind teachers. When we are well taught, we are as anxious to do what is required of us as they are to have us.

Sometimes it seemed to me that Razzle's obedience pleased her more than it did Uncle Toby, and she was so quick to read his wishes, that to be with her, made me feel as stupid as a hen in comparison.

Besides her intelligent loving qualities, Razzle seemed to have a fondness for making people laugh, and once she actually set both Billy and me, to smiling aloud! Uncle Toby had taught her to do things which he called tricks, and the children loved to have her do them for Dazzle and Billy and me, in the farm-yard. She could walk on two legs, and tell us stories in a soft little whinny; nod her head to say how many times she was years old, shake

hands with Buntie and Boo, and kiss their faces, just as tenderly as they kissed us.

One morning when we were all back of the house playing with the children, and Buntie had been making Razzle do her tricks, she seemed to be so full of mischief, that it was not enough to do what was asked of her; so over and again she shook her head to tell her age, and offered us her hand to shake. Then suddenly as both the children had their mouths wide open, laughing, Razzle plunged her nose deep into a pail of buttermilk, that was standing near, and kissed Buntie all over her face and hair. If you could have seen the bright lights dancing in Razzle's eyes then, and how she enjoyed the joke, you would never doubt again that she could think things out for herself.

When I watched her, as I did many times, standing on her hind legs, or doing so cleverly anything that was asked of her, a great yearning would come to me to do all that she could, and perhaps more. I remembered Uncle Toby's words, that I

would make a good trick pony, and now that I knew what he meant, I felt a growing conviction that he was right.

About this time, our farmer, who had been with us ever since I could remember, had disappeared, leaving Uncle Toby without help, and the children's mother alone. He had been a strange man always, and we saw him so little that we never gave him a thought, or cared when he went or came.

But now the crops were at their height, and there must have been a great deal to do, for Uncle Toby came with Razzle and Dazzle, and stayed with us till another man was hired. Ah! well do I recall that day, and the change it brought into my life.

One morning as I was taking the children to town, and we were trotting leisurely along, having a jolly time all by ourselves, there suddenly loomed ahead of us, near a turn in the road, a huge thing looking like a piece of board-fence, so tall that no horse could ever jump it; and all

over its face were pictures of flaming red, and black, and yellow. I never remember having seen such frightful things, and I nearly forgot all my good resolves, for I stopped so suddenly that Boo came tumbling over the dasher, giving me a hard push with his hands, to keep himself from going further.

Buntie tried to make me go on, but this was such an unusual sight that I could not bear to get any nearer to it, till she tickled me with the whip and said:

"You silly thing, Cap, go along. Don't you know that is nothing but the circus bill-board, and it will never hurt you?"

When she spoke in this tone of voice I always felt safer, so I trotted by quickly, though I kept as far away as the opposite gutter would allow.

I don't think the children's mother knew we were going to town that morning, for when we left the house, we started in the opposite direction, taking a path back across a field to the main road; and I heard the children laugh as they said:

"Ma will never know that we have gone to see the circus parade."

Something in their voices made my blood tingle; and after I had that sudden introduction to the bill-board, I scented an unusual excitement in the air, which increased as we neared town.

Although it was early in the day, the streets were filled with people, some standing on the sidewalks as if they were waiting to see us go by; while vehicles of every description, from farm wagons to shining teams, were drawn up by the curbings, all waiting, waiting for something, I knew not what.

There were strange faces I had never seen on our streets before. Women with bright cloths tied over their heads, were walking beside dark looking men, who made music every little while on a queer machine which they wound up; and it set me to dancing in spite of myself. There were shafts on these machines, large enough for me to get into, and I couldn't help thinking what fun it would be, to be

harnessed into one of them and hear that jolly music all day.

After a while, Buntie drove down a side street, where turning me around to face the main road, she said:

"Stand still now, Cappie, and see what is coming."

Of course I was full of wondering, but I had not long to wait, for she had scarcely finished speaking, when I heard music so gay it nearly took me off my feet. Then a lot of men came marching along, dressed in brilliant colours, and they were playing big gold instruments that shone in the sun. Buntie told Boo it was a brass band, but I had never heard one before.

I think there is something in bright colours that gets into my blood, for I delight to look at them, and always feel like following them; I would have done so now, but the street was so crowded I was afraid.

By this time, horses and bicycles were packed so closely around me, that if Buntie had wanted to turn and drive away, there would have been no room to move.

I could feel through the reins that she was frightened, and when I looked at her, her hands trembled and her cheeks were flushed. But Boo's eyes were shining, and I knew fresh mischief was brewing; so I made a great effort to think of Razzle, and to listen to the new voice which was whispering:

"Be very careful, Cap, you are in a hard place!"

Then I stood still, though I quivered in every muscle. As far as I could see, the streets had turned into a moving mass of people and things. Now directly in front of us, marching two by two, there came a lot of great animals with humps on their backs, carrying pretty girls between the humps; then the elephants walked by, nodding their stupid looking heads, and keeping time to the music, with their long noses,—and one of them reached around and tried to grab me. I would have run back, but I remembered it was not safe.

Now away up the street I could see horses of every colour walking together;

wonderful creatures of shining black, and creamy white, wearing golden harnesses and all sorts of gay trimmings, and they were so beautiful that I forgot to be afraid. How daintily they stepped to the music, and how they arched their proud necks. I wished I could carry mine the same way, but I was so little, I would still look insignificant if I tried.

Following close to the horses' heels, there came a large number of ugly, red-looking men and women, covered with bright spangles, and wearing feathers on their heads; then strange animals riding past in golden carriages, frightened me, and set my nostrils to quivering. I thought I surely must go away if I could, but just that minute something began to play in the distance, that set all the horses around me to jumping and rearing. Then I heard Boo clap his hands, and cry out with delight:

"O sister, the steam-piano is coming, see quick!"

We did not need to see, it was enough

to hear; for six great black horses, with crimson plumes on their heads, came prancing along, dragging behind them an instrument with huge pipes, that seemed to exist for no other purpose but to fill the air with the most fiendish sounds that a poor untrained pony ever listened to. Never in my short life had such an outrage been committed against all that was good in me. My resolve to be quiet as an old horse, no matter what happened, went floating away with the blasts from the pipes of that machine, and died out with them, so that I could not have called it back if I would. Every time those pipes snorted, I jumped and snorted with them, till at last I became so frightened that I forgot who I was, or that the children were behind me in the cart. Then I backed frantically into a horse, and plunging forward, bolted for the sidewalk, in the midst of screaming women and children, who tried to run away, but could not, because there was nowhere to run. Buntie's hold was so light on the reins, I

could not feel it, and I knew she had lost her courage, though Boo, dear little man, was laughing aloud, and just when I would have stopped, he struck me a stinging blow with the whip such as I had never felt before, and shouted:

"Come back into the road with you, quick!"

This was too much! I did come back in the road, and dashed into the midst of the circus parade, close behind a lot of men who were walking with the horses; and it would be hard to say what dreadful thing I might have done, had not a strong hand on my bridle brought me to my senses, and to a standstill.

Buntie had dropped the reins, and both children were now pale with fright, as the stranger, turning me around, led me out of the crowd. As soon as I felt his touch on my bridle, I was heartily ashamed of myself! Our dear children were in my care, and I had forgotten them. What would Razzle and Uncle Toby say?

There was another thing also which I

began to feel keenly, and this was the hand of the man who was holding my head. There was something strange about the touch, for although not heavy, it was masterful; and a whisper running from it, along the rein, into my consciousness, told me that whether I would or no, here was one I must obey. It was not a good feeling he gave me, because I knew that obedience to him would be from fear, and never for love. Anxious as I was to get away from him, I dared make no effort to do so. Even when he let go of me, I stood perfectly still, and tried not to let him see how I was trembling.

When he had led us to a place of safety, and Buntie thanked him for his help, he still lingered beside me as if he had something more to say. At length after looking me over closely, stroking my coat, taking my mane and tail in his fingers, and finally opening my mouth to examine my teeth, he gave a low whistle, and turning to the chi[illegible] said:

"This is a pretty pony you have here,

but he is too young and too much excited for you to drive home alone. I think I will go with you." Then he climbed into the cart and took the reins.

I can never tell you how I hated to have him drive me, but I dared not rebel. Although I knew he was behind me, I still could see him close in front of me, with his cold, grey eyes, glittering out from his black face, and shaggy brows; and he gave me the same feeling of danger I have had, when in the pasture, a bolt of lightning flashed upon me from out a dark cloud—and I knew that even though I ran to cover, there was no protection from it anywhere.

He was of average height, though he looked even shorter, for he had a sneaking stoop, that I have often seen in bad men. There seems to be something in their minds that weighs their bodies down, and keeps them from looking up, and out at the world, as a good man does. Sometimes I think it must always be a sorry voice that is speaking to them. The man was

not only sorry-looking, but black, for with his heavy hair and beard, he seemed all darkness—no light anywhere.

I heard him talking to the children, asking who they were, what their grandfather's name was, and who took care of his horses. When he came in sight of the house, he stopped me, and gave Buntie the reins, saying:

"Good-bye, little girl. It would never do for me to go near the house where your mother could see me, for she would be afraid something had happened to her babies." Then he got out of the cart and walked back toward the town.

He was gone, yet as much as I dreaded him, no feeling of relief came to me. Only a great sadness, and a foreboding of sorrow such as I had never felt before. Then regret, too, played a sharp tune on my memory, for it told me that if I had not allowed myself to get frightened, this man would never have noticed me.

I was too wretched all that day to eat the oats that were left in my shed for me.

CHAPTER VI

Toward evening when I lay out under the willow tree, thinking of and regretting all that had happened through the day, I heard a threatening roar of thunder in the distance, which made my misery complete. There was no red and gold sunset that night, for the storm clouds continued to grow black, and though it did not rain it was dark very early.

I had not been to the river for water all the afternoon, and now as the black night closed in around me, I became so thirsty that my mouth and throat felt parched. But somehow I was very nervous and actually afraid to go down the steep path to the river. If only Billy were here, I thought, he would keep me company, so I whinnied three times as loudly as I could.

But Billy, my faithful friend, was much nearer than I realized, and before I had finished speaking, he was barking at my heels. He seemed to know exactly what was in my mind, for he followed me closely, though now very silently, down the hill. Once I noticed he stopped, and lifting his nose into the air, he sniffed long and suspiciously, as though there were something about, which he did not like, and then he kept his place even closer to me than before.

Just as we reached the river, a flash of lightning darted through a heavy cloud that hung over the water, and lighting everything around us, fell upon the dark figure of a man, slouching away into some bushes near by. It disappeared so quickly that I almost thought it a shadow, but Billy gave a deep, ugly growl, such as we seldom heard from him, and then he crouched behind me to keep a faithful lookout, while I drank.

It did not take me long that night to climb the hill and put myself under cover.

And I was conscious of a strong sense of relief, when I saw Billy throw himself down in one corner of my shed, where, stretching his nose out upon his extended paws, he lay with wide-open, watchful eyes.

I was awake myself for what seemed hours to me, watching the lightning play in the green of the willow branches drooping over our door, and dreading the roaring thunder which always followed a flash, sooner or later. If it could only lighten without thundering, what fun it would be to see it! But horses do fear that terrible roar.

I could never understand how it happened that, excited as I was, I finally fell asleep in the midst of that storm. I do not know what time it was when I awoke, but the clouds had cleared away, and a moon which seemed to me to be growing smaller every night now, looked into my shed with a very bright smile, considering it had only half a face to smile with! A breeze was stirring the leaves in front of

the door, till their shadows danced all over the patch of moon-beam that shone upon my floor. The night was beautiful, yet there was something strange about it, for though I knew not why, a sudden horror came over me, that set me to trembling from my nose to my crupper bone. Then the horror was increased by a fierce, low growl, from the corner where Billy lay, and a stealthy step that was surely coming nearer! Billy stopped growling, and lay crouched as though ready for a spring. But he did not move a muscle, even as much as to wink, when the figure of a strange man stepped through the door, into the middle of the moon-beam patch, and looking at me, gave a low whistle like the one I had heard in the morning. That whistle brought a shiver of terror to me, for it told me who my visitor was, and I knew that he was here for no good purpose. He did not see Billy, for he had no eyes for anything but me, as patting my neck he said:

"Well, Cap, you beauty, it's you and me

now that will be partners. Come on, take your bit like a good boy!" and he tried to force a bit between my teeth.

I had been afraid of him in the morning, but now I believe I would have died on the spot, rather than to open my mouth for him. I threw up my head, and rearing on my hind legs, reached out to strike him with my hoofs as I came down. He laughed very low at this, as if he were afraid of being heard, till he found I really would not have my bridle on, and then he struck me a blow between the eyes that blinded me, and made me stagger for a minute:

"Take that, will yer, and see who will be master now!"

But he had not reckoned on the presence of a third party. No sooner had he struck the blow, than there was the fiercest growl I ever heard, as springing with one bound, Billy fastened his teeth into the palm of the hand which had struck me, and held it in a grip so cruel that the man cried out in pain. He kicked Billy, and tried with

his free hand to tear his jaws apart, but the teeth only set tighter, till the half frantic man started for the door, and then Billy let go. After this, so long as that man's back was turned to me, and he faced the door, Billy crouched quietly between us; but every time he moved as though he would come toward me, a hoarse growl and a shaking jaw warned him to keep a stranger's distance.

This play, in which I seemed to take no part, though to my sorrow I have since learned how large a part I did play, went on for hours, it seemed, and not one foot nearer to me did the wretch get. I think Billy would have torn him into atoms, had he touched me again. At last when the moon had gone out, and the darkness was not so black, I heard the sleepy call of a bird over our heads; then with a horrible oath, and the threat that he would see us before long, the man went away.

Several days following this fearful night, Billy and I were the closest companions. Indeed, he seldom left me for an hour, not

even going to the house when the children called him, unless he was in need of food. He seemed to feel grave doubts of my safety, and believing that one good turn deserved another, he decided to repeat the turn himself, by being on hand for any second attack of danger that might come to me.

Brave, noble Billy! If for departed dogs, somewhere in the unknown, God has planted green fields, and pastures that never wither, I am sure that Billy will sleep in the corner where the sun shines the warmest, and the sweetest bones are buried. For never was a truer friend, or a merrier playfellow than he. Sometimes when I was trotting down hill, with Buntie and Boo, trying as hard as ever I could to keep the cart from running into me, Billy would come and bark at my heels, or dodging in front of me, nip my nose, or almost trip my feet—yet even then I loved him!

And now that he had deserted the children, and clung so closely to me, I was

happy, though I could not help knowing that he dreaded some unseen danger. This of course made me uncomfortable, and I did not wander very far from my shed for more than a week. Then another thing which made me feel dreary, was that ever since the thunder, the sky had worn nothing but thick grey, and I had begun to fear the sun would never wake up again.

But finally one day, when Billy and I trotted up to the house to say good morning, we saw the sun once more turning Boo's curls into gold, and shining in Uncle Toby's one open eye, while it shut the other into a little squint he so often wore, when the light got too friendly with him.

Buntie and Boo were right glad to see us, but the master did not turn to speak as usual, for he was talking with a stranger and I heard him say:

"Very well, you may sleep in the carriage house for a night or two, till things are straightened out, and if your recommendations come, I will hire you. Mean-

time you can take hold and help me, for I shall stay here the rest of the week."

Just then my master's eye fell on me, and coming to me, he put his arms around my neck, and laid his face against mine. Oh! but I loved him, and he has always been kind to me, so I love him still. Presently the strange man came towards us, and Uncle Toby said:

"Dick, this is the Shetland I have been telling you about. He is very intelligent, and if you are used to training horses, as you say you are, I shall expect you to teach him some rare tricks. What do you think of his eyes?"

By this time I understood that this stranger was to be our new hired man; and the thought that he was a horse-man, and would train me to do all sorts of things, made me feel glad. I turned and looked him full in the face. There was something familiar about him, yet so far as I could tell I had never seen him before.

He was much shorter than Uncle Toby, and he wore his hair close-cut. His face

was smooth-shaven, and he had a square cruel jaw, that surely had never till now, showed itself to me, or I could not have forgotten it. Yet when he came closer, running his hands through my mane, and looking into my eyes, that strange shiver ran over me, which I had felt once before, at the touch of a hand—and my instinct spoke again! Just here Billy growled fiercely, and crouching near me, grinned in a way that gave the man a fair warning, as to the size and possible use of his teeth. Then the chain of evidence became complete, when I noticed that the stranger's right hand was bandaged. This Dick was no other than our rescuer on circus day, and our would-be horse thief at night. And he was coming to take care of us!

Oh! if I could only describe the wave of fear that passed over me. In an hour, the simple trusting nature that Uncle Toby and Razzle had so carefully developed in me, turned into one of anger and doubt, which I knew would remain with me, till I was free from the presence of

this wretch, who had come into my life. I was glad when I heard Billy continue to growl, and saw that he had attracted our master's attention. Why could he not understand what Billy was trying so hard to tell him, and what I too, tried to convey, by the fit of kicking and snorting that seized me when I felt Dick's hand in my mane?

I think a slight doubt did cross Uncle Toby's mind, for he looked sharply at the new man as he said to Billy:

"Why, old boy, what's the matter with you? Stop your noise!" Then patting me fondly he said: "Quiet now, Jinks, you old chums are strangely excited this morning. Can't you tell your master about it?"

Just think of his asking that question, when we were trying so hard to tell him. Was not that heart-breaking? Never in all my life had I wanted so much to talk a language that he could understand.

CHAPTER VII

After this nothing ever seemed quite the same at the farm. Billy continued his attitude of distrust toward the new man, and I made no effort to conceal mine. Whenever Dick came near me, that awful voice which Razzle called the tempter, spoke so loudly that I usually obeyed it, because I could hear no other. I snapped and kicked and struck till Razzle looked discouraged. Though after he left me I would often run to comfort her, assuring her that I was not all bad, and I would be good once more, when that wicked man was gone. She knew all our troubles, and was gentle and patient. But I could see that master, who did not understand, was sorely tried. How I longed to be gentle for his sake, but I could not.

There is one thing I must say in Dick's

favour, and it is that during his stay with us, he was never unkind in any way, to either Billy or me. I think he knew we remembered that terrible night and he was trying to make us forget.

He had been at the farm but a few days, when early one morning Uncle Toby came to the bars, and whistled for me. I knew his call and hurried to answer it, but when I reached him, I was disappointed to find he was not alone. Dick was with him and came forward to meet me, telling me as he led me by the mane, that Uncle Toby wanted me to learn some tricks, and I must be a good pony and mind what he told me to do.

After this there came a succession of weary, heart-breaking days. Whenever my master stood looking on, I tried with all my might to obey this man who seemed to fill me with an evil spirit; but when Uncle Toby was away, many and hard were the struggles between us. Every morning brought a battle, with a victory to one of us, till at length I had become

a trained pony, and could take my place among the best, so master said.

I could do all the tricks which Razzle did so well, and many more besides; for I could waltz to the music of Dick's mouth-organ, select the colour he named, from pieces of cloth, and carry to him different things he asked for, without making any mistakes. I could tell my age too, by nodding my head a certain number of times, and do some simple reckoning, that seemed to astonish every one who came to see me.

But these things were very easy after all, for Dick used the same words over and over again, when he asked me to do a trick, till I learned to associate the words with the act. I should have been very proud of my accomplishments, had they been taught me by any other than Dick. For I hated him so bitterly that it took all the pleasure away, though I tried to atone for my wickedness, by doing these tricks for my master, every time he came near me, or I heard the sound of his voice.

When Dick asked me to perform for

him, it was quite a different thing, for I was so slow to respond to him that he usually said:

"Come on, Cap, don't always be behind like a dog's tail!" This never failed to make me angry, for it seemed like finding fault with Billy's tail because it was behind him. And I couldn't help wondering if it would not be a sad thing for us to wake up some morning and find that friendly black and white tail of Billy's wagging from the top of his head, instead of the end of his crupper bone.

Dick seemed to understand things upside-down anyway. Yet he and Uncle Toby agreed so well, that I had begun to fear he would stay with us always.

But the end of my torture came much sooner than I had hoped; though by a chain of sad events, that were bound to come, through a man who had so much wickedness in him, as Dick had.

For some time the children had been looking at a new picture on the bill boards around town; and I heard Buntie telling

Boo, that it was the steamer which was going to take the church people up river, into the great lake for a picnic. Then when he clapped his hands and seemed so pleased, she said:

"Yes, Dearie, we are all going. Mother and you and I. Mother said I might wear my white muslin with the forget-me-nots on it, and my big hat with the poppies. And you, Boo, I guess you'd better wear your little blue Buster clothes, because they go so prettily with your eyes."

I thought so too, for I am sure I liked to see him look pretty, as much as Buntie did, and if it were possible, I loved him every bit as well. After this they talked of nothing but the picnic, till at last one bright hot morning, I saw the whole family dressed as they usually were, when we took them to the little chapel on Sunday; and when Boo came out and jumped on my back he said:

"Be good to-day, won't you, Cappie, for this is our picnic day, and you must stay at home to look after things for us."

I understood then what was coming, and was not surprised when Uncle Toby drove out of the yard, with the new horse, Colonel, taking our mistress with him, and leaving Dick to follow with the children, driving Razzle and Dazzle in the little surrey.

He was so long getting away, that Boo was crying, and I heard him say:

"Please, Dick, do hurry, or the boat will be gone when we get there."

Dick was not in good humour that morning, and my heart nearly jumped out of me, when I saw him running the ponies down the hill, cracking his whip in the air, and laying it across their backs with a cruel blow, which almost made Dazzle leap clear of the harness. Billy followed them to the road, and then walking back, he threw himself at my feet with a threatening growl, looking the picture of despair and hatred. Alas! I knew what was in his mind, and the worry which we shared alike kept us very near to each other, all that day. When Billy and I were alone,

we went back into the pasture to seek the shade of the big willow; for the sun, refusing even to blink his eyes, just kept them so wide awake, that there was not a cool dark place anywhere.

I think I must admit that I felt slighted, when I began to think over the events of the morning; and I could not help wondering, why I had not taken the children to the steam-boat landing? It was my place, and I should have been sure they would be safe. Of course I could trust Razzle with them, but Dick and Dazzle were scarcely a good working team. Dazzle both feared and hated him, with such vicious might, that my *reason* foretold trouble. It was not instinct, talking to me this morning, for I was doing some active thinking, which finally resulted in a fear I could not drive away.

How often in after years, have I recalled that day, and how many times has its story been whispered into my ear, by Buntie and Boo, while they hung about my neck in loving confidence. But I will give you

the details as I heard them told by Uncle Toby.

The new horse, Colonel, was a tall, long-legged, awkward creature. But Uncle Toby said that just because his legs were so long, he could cover the ground with them in short meter.

I did not quite understand what he meant by this, for it seemed to me, no matter what short meter was, that anything Colonel's legs could get into, must be long instead of short.

The landing from which the river-boat sailed was four miles away, and with a horse as swift as his, Uncle Toby must have been half way there, when the children drove out of the yard. Dick had been to town the night before, and I think he brought some whiskey home with him, for I saw him put a bottle in his coat pocket, just as he got into the carriage. I did not know then what horrible things whiskey can do, for men and women; though since, I have learned to my sorrow.

Dick had never driven to the wharf before, but both Buntie and the ponies knew the way perfectly. Now it so chanced, that two roads, apparently running the same direction, turned off to the right. One was a well worn thoroughfare, and the other, a short cut to the river, was nothing more than a cart-path, used mostly by foot passengers. Dick drew rein here and looked questioningly out each road.

"Take the further one," Buntie said. "It is longer, but safer."

"H'm, longer is it, then we'll try the nearest one," and he turned the ponies into it so shortly, that they nearly upset the surrey. Buntie grasped his arm, and looking up at him with frightened eyes, begged him to go back.

"It is boggy all the way, Dick," she said, "and the landing is on the other side. There is no bridge, and only one safe place to wade across. What if we should not find this, and get into the quagmire? Please, Dick, please do go back," and both children began to cry.

It was then that all the good in Dick went away, leaving nothing, for the time being, but bad. For when he saw Boo was crying, he struck him on his dear little cheek, making it so red and sore, it looked as if the blood were coming through.

"Take that, will yer," he said, "yer great bawling baby." Then he began lashing the ponies, till even Razzle reared, and tried to run. Dazzle was glad to see her show a little spunk at last, so he helped her along, and before Dick knew it, he had lost control of his team, and the ponies were running away.

Buntie began to realize now that Dick did not know what he was doing. He made no effort to guide the frightened animals, but swinging the reins over his head, he broke into a drunken song which he interrupted at intervals, by taking a long drink from the bottle in his pocket. Then he flung the empty flask with such force against a great tree, which they were whirling past, that it crashed into a thousand pieces.

By this time, both ponies, thoroughly frightened, were holding the bits in their teeth. The road was rough and unsafe for fast going, there was no hand to guide them, and they had passed beyond the power of reasoning. On, on they flew, with foaming nostrils and gleaming eyes, now stumbling and almost falling over the stubbles, and into the deep ruts under their feet; rounding the sharp turns in the road with a speed that swayed the carriage from right to left, Dick laughing wildly, and the white-faced children clinging to the seat, with all the strength in their little arms, — drawing nearer, with every frantic hoof-beat, to the danger that lay stretched beyond. One more curve in the narrow path, where the tall trees gave place to the stumps and underbrush of the "cut-down," — and then gleaming before them, the changing sands of the river, piled wide and high by the freshets of years. Between the road and the river lay the still, dead waters of the creek, with its treacherous bog on either side and

toward a narrow place in this, Dick now tried to rein the ponies.

Buntie saw what he was doing, and with terror she clasped her brother to her heart. Then as if inspired by both love and fear, she sprang forward, and grasping the reins from Dick's hands, began talking in a crooning voice to Razzle. The frightened feet flew on, wild and unrestrained, till gradually, up along the reins into Razzle's foaming mouth, there ran the consciousness of Buntie's gentle touch; and with it, the pony began to hear her voice, and to listen. There were only a few steps more before crossing the narrow rise of grass-land, when they would plunge into the bog beyond. Suddenly, throwing up her head, and looking around her with a groan of despair, Razzle planted her feet firmly upon the ground, and tried to stop. But it was too late, for Dazzle was still wild, as pulling at the harness with all his might, he rushed headlong down the bank, dragging Razzle with him, where they sunk to their flanks in the mud.

Razzle stood perfectly still, looking around at the children with wide scared eyes. She had been caught in the mud before, and knew how useless it was to struggle. But Dazzle was beyond all control and unless help came soon, both ponies would be drowned. If Dick would only loosen the harness and set them free! But he had not the presence of mind, either to get out of the surrey, or tell the children to. The back wheels of the carriage were still on the grass, and the children might climb out over the seat, in safety. But Boo was too small to think of this, and Buntie's whole attention was upon Razzle. If only she could save her—but how? Every moment the danger increased, and the child became more helpless. If the harness were not loosened, Dazzle's frantic efforts would soon sink the carriage. But hark! Did some one call Buntie's name, or was it but an echo born of hope? No, for there it was again,—louder this time, coming nearer, and surely in Uncle Toby's own dear voice! Both children for-

got to answer him, though he had reached the clearing where he could see them plainly. Colonel stopped at once, and Uncle Toby, jumping from the carriage pulled a knife from his pocket while he ran, and in less time than I could tell the story to you, he had cut the harness and set the ponies free.

Dick had fallen in a heap on the grass, but the children were safe in the surrey. Razzle was standing still, though Dazzle was struggling vainly, and sinking deeper with every effort to get away.

Uncle Toby was beside himself with grief, for he saw that he could never save the drowning pony. It was then that he turned his attention to Razzle. She had not sunken so deeply in the mud as her bad tempered mate, and there was still hope of her saving herself by jumping into the waters of the creek just ahead. But Razzle was not thinking of herself, for her eyes were on Dazzle, as at every plunge he made, she seemed to advise and coax him with an anxious whinny. Uncle Toby

saw and understood, but she was too valuable, and too deeply loved, to be allowed to perish needlessly. Something must be done,—so scarcely conscious of the act, he grasped the whip, and bringing it down once, twice, three times, with a cruel blow upon her back, he shouted:

"Up, Razzle, up, I tell you. There's a good girl now,—make a brave struggle to reach the creek and swim ashore!"

She turned one surprised grief-stricken glance at her master, and then as the third blow stung her into a groan of pain, she sprang forward with a mighty effort, and freeing herself from the mire, plunged into the creek beyond.

Dazzle was now placed in a more dangerous position than before, for the hole which his mate had left, was so close beside him, that while the mud rushed together to fill that living grave, it sunk him deeper and deeper, till with a cry of despair which rang through the woods, he was buried from their sight.

"'UP, RAZZLE, UP, I TELL YOU.'"

And the cruel marsh that closed over him, left no trace on its dark surface, either of its own treachery, or the life that had gone out beneath it.

CHAPTER VIII

After the morning's accident, it was a sad yet thankful party that wended its way back over the cart path, and headed toward Helendale.

Earlier in the day, as Uncle Toby neared the steamer landing, and saw no trace of the children and Dick, the same fear that was filling Billy and me, came to him, and filled him so full that he turned back, hoping to meet the missing party and guide them to the steamer. Colonel was given the reins, and half the distance home had been covered, yet the ponies were not in sight. But as Uncle Toby turned from the cross road into the main road, the anxious mother, looking out the cart path, saw the prints of Razzle's and Dazzle's hoofs in the sand.

With a smothered cry Uncle Toby

turned Colonel into the path. As he did so, the noble animal tossed his head, and sniffed the air with wide opened eyes and nostrils. His instinct spoke, and he knew the children were in danger. He called to the ponies over and again, but no answer came; and then, out over the stubbles and threatening ruts, with head close to the ground, silent and swift he flew, till the clearing was reached, and the dear ones in sight.

It was indeed with a thankful heart, that Uncle Toby gave the children into their mother's arms.

Dick was left just where he fell, on the banks of the bog, face down. And whether he rolled into the mire, sharing Dazzle's fate, or had escaped from the village, was not known to us for many a day after. Alas! that he should ever have come into our lives again.

After Razzle threw herself into the creek, she was guided by that strange instinct for safety, which horses always feel; and heading at once toward the ford-

ing place, she swam safely ashore. She was utterly exhausted, and looked about her in search of Dazzle, crying pitifully. Uncle Toby soothed and petted her as best he could, but she would not be comforted, for she realized the sad truth all too well.

At last she was induced to be led home very slowly, behind Colonel. The distance was not great, but she scarcely kept up till we turned her into the barn-yard. She was rubbed down, and given hot drinks, but nothing seemed to revive her. For days she lay with her eyes closed, or sometimes looking around, she would whinny softly as though calling her lost mate back to her. But when she saw he did not come, she only closed her eyes again, refusing for hours either to open them, or to move.

This was a sad experience for me, because Razzle had not spoken to me during all these days of mourning. I had learned from the family what had happened, and I wanted very much to comfort her if it were possible. But how could I, if she would neither speak, nor look at me. And

I grieved to see that she grew weaker each hour, and took less interest in life.

Then one day when I had begun to fear the worst for my playmate, something happened which worked a joyous change.

She had been lying asleep all the morning, and the time had seemed endless to me. Toward noon she breathed so softly that I feared she had stopped altogether, and I crept close up to her to listen. Then I laid my face against hers, and spoke her name. For some time she seemed not to hear me, but finally a tremor shook her body, and opening her eyes she looked at me, first in a dazed sort of way, as if she did not know me, and then the old light which belonged to Razzle's eyes, began to creep back into them. My heart beat wildly for joy, but I did not speak, for I could not. And the silence which fell between us was broken by her.

"Dazzle has gone away from us, did you know it, Cap? It was Dick who killed him. You always hated Dick, and so did Dazzle. So have I, since—till now.

"I think I must have had a dream, Cap, for all the morning I have been passing through a strange, sweet experience, which I would like to have last for ever. For hours, it seemed to me, I was trotting unharnessed, over fields and pastures, more beautiful than any pony could describe. No grass was ever so soft and green, no clover ever smelled so sweetly. The sun was bright and warm, though it neither burned me, nor made me blink. And all along the way, clear glittering water bubbled from springs, which were made, I knew, to refresh thirsty, weary horses, who might be travelling this road.

"But I was not weary, even though I seemed to be travelling both far and fast. And though the grass, the clover, and the sparkling water, seemed each to be calling me to stop and taste its sweetness, yet not once did I slacken my pace, but kept on, on, in search of something, I knew not what. In all this journey there had not been a hill to climb, and not one mile of rough road.

"I did not wonder where I was, for some impulse kept me moving, with a joy that was almost maddening. Thus far I had not met a horse on the way; but suddenly, as I emerged from a clump of pines, beneath which lay a soft carpet for tired feet, a pony was standing across the path in front of me. She spoke to me, ever so gently, calling me by name; and when I looked at her closely, I recognized my mother, who died when I was but four years of age. I had known her well, Cap, for I lived with her till after I was in harness. And it was she who taught me to be loving and kind. The meeting with her seemed perfectly natural, though I realized it was not this alone which I was seeking. Then she spoke to me:

"'Come nearer, dear, and let me see you. Yes, it is my own little Razzle, the same I used to know and love in Uncle Toby's pasture. But why are you here, child? The way is not yet ready for you. Even Dazzle, who has travelled for days,

is still seeking his place of rest, though he is nearly there.'

"Ah! now I knew,—I was hunting for Dazzle. You see we were brother and sister, Cap, and nothing has ever separated us before. But mother was speaking again.

"'I do not think you realize where you are, Razzle. And I must break it gently to you,—for this is horse's Heaven.

"'Men do not believe in a Heaven for animals, but when you go back, you may tell them that God never created a soul to perish. You may tell them too, that he has given horses, souls. And after we have worked without a murmur, for our masters, till our bodies are worn out, and we are ready to die, God has provided this place of rest for our spirits. Perhaps when men realize that we are able to think and feel like themselves, they will be kinder to us, if we fail, either from illness, or lack of strength, to do the work they ask of us.

"'But as I said before, Razzle, you are

not yet ready for rest. Dazzle, who is safe, will be waiting here for you till your work is finished. Go back and be happy.'

"Then before I could speak, or ask one of the thousand questions arising in my mind, she had trotted away so lightly and rapidly, that she was beyond recall. I tried to follow her, but something compelled me to turn back over the same beautiful road I had travelled in the morning.

"It was you who awoke me, Cap, and I was very sorry at first. But now I am glad, for I shall get well, and we will play together again, you and I."

CHAPTER IX

After this Razzle grew stronger each day. We were very happy to see her like her old self once more, and we realized that though she missed Dazzle sadly, she was reconciled to his death.

We were glad also to be rid of Dick, for life had been very hard with so wicked a master. Razzle was not harnessed again that year but she continued to live with me in the pasture, all the rest of the season. As the summer wore on, I think we all missed Dazzle far more than we would have imagined, considering his cross temper. But I have learned that the breaking up of old ties, even if they are not the happiest, is hard for us all. And I once heard Uncle Toby say, that horses, like men, never seem to develop their best traits of character, till after they had passed away.

Now that the harvest had come, our master was often at the farm and Colonel was becoming a welcome visitor to Razzle and me. He was a great awkward bay, as I think I have told you before, but his good qualities were so many, and he showed such unusual kindness to us, that we were growing to love him. I used often to wonder why he seemed to love us so much, when we were such silly little creatures, compared to him. But I believe now that we seemed like his own children, and he took a genuine delight in playing with us.

Sometimes when we did not know he was in the pasture, he would startle us by a loud whinny, and then we would see him come tearing down the river bank, digging up the turf with his great hoofs, and threatening in his speed to pitch head first into the water, or to fall upon and crush us, with his weight. But nothing of the kind ever happened; so we learned not to fear, and after a time, to wait for his signal to join him in a frolic.

It was his habit when he had drunk long and deeply from the river, to stand a moment looking at us as if he would say: "Now, children, now for our game of catch!" And then with a startling snort, he would gallop away up the hill, and over the pasture. He seemed to make the great willow, one goal, and the pasture bars another, challenging us to catch if we could. But when our old friend Billy came out to join us, the game grew exciting. For Billy, barking all the time, ran now at our heels nipping them gently, or again catching one of us by the tail, he would hold fast while we dragged him from one goal to the other.

These were merry days. But soon the harvesting was done, and nothing but dreary brown stubbles were left in the fields. Then the children went to town to school, Uncle Toby took Colonel home, and Razzle and I were lonely indeed.

That was a cold hard winter. There were days when it seemed as though the sun would never again shine on the

dead, white world around us. Days when Razzle and I, together with the sheep, stood huddled under our shed from morning till night, trying in vain to keep warm. But in all this dreariness, there was one bright spot, toward which we had learned to turn our faces, and this was Billy's daily visit.

A young man from the village had been hired by Uncle Toby, to keep the farm house open, and to take care of the cattle. There was something strange about this boy. He never seemed to think straight like other persons I had known, and he gave his heels no end of trouble because of it. If he intended bringing meal and salt to us, after getting both ready, he would be sure to walk away leaving one behind him, never remembering it till he reached the camp, when without a word he would return for the forgotten article. After a while Billy, who seemed to realize that he was not like other people, decided to keep a careful watch over him. And so he did, for whenever he saw that Walter

had forgotten anything, he would bark at his heels till he was glad to turn back. But the boy was kind to us, and though he looked far from strong, he took good care of us, and was faithful to our master.

And so it came about that Billy's anxiety for Walter, brought them together to visit us each morning. I shall never forget how he stirred up our little company, as he darted among us, barking at the sheep and chasing them down the hill to water, where he usually left them to come back for Razzle and me. And while we ran at his bidding, he was leaping upon us with delight, kissing us on the nose, or in the eye, wherever he chanced to hit.

At length there came a change in the days, and a new light fell from the sun, warming us and making our hearts glad. Spring was coming. Already the ice in the river was breaking up, and now away in the creek, I could hear the rush of the angry water cease, as though it stopped its mad tumbling, just to gather new force, and then with a roar which always fright-

ened me, it would throw itself leaping and foaming against the great blocks of ice, as if it were trying to break through and make its escape.

But one bright morning when the odour of spring was so strong in the air, that it made us very happy, a cloud came upon us; it was small at first, but it thickened and darkened, till there seemed no way out of it, no light anywhere.

On this particular morning when we were waiting joyously for Billy and Walter to bring our food to us, we became conscious that the sun was climbing high, our stomachs were very empty, and yet they had not come. I could see that Razzle was growing anxious, and when she started toward the farmyard, I followed her, quite as anxious as she. When we reached the bars, we saw with wonder, that the curtains were all drawn over the windows of the little farm house, and that the red door was still closed. No sign of life anywhere, and no sound of either Walter or Billy. We thrust our noses between

the bars and whinnied loudly, but we received no answer to our calls.

The place seemed deserted, and so were we. Razzle thought it best to remain near the house, for somehow her instinct told her that Walter was sick, and if we kept a sharp lookout, we might be of some help to him, or he to us. But where was Billy, and why had he not barked when he heard our voices?

The hours dragged slowly, but at last the night came, and then the morning. All that day, helpless and cold, we watched the house, but we got no signal from the missing ones. Only heartless windows, with drawn curtains, and the old red door I was learning to despise again, stared at us when the second night closed over us.

The snow had melted away in spots where the sun lay warmest on the top of the hill, and here we were able to nibble a few brown blades of grass. These kept us from starving, though when the third day dawned, we went early, but with longing hearts, back to the pasture bars.

Razzle neighed loudly and I followed her example. The sheep too were bleating pitifully, but the inmates of the little house seemed as deaf as ever to our needs. But no, for listen. Did not a faint bark from within come in answer to our calls, and was not that Billy's black nose pushing itself under the curtain?

Yes, for there was the bark again, weak, but surely his; then the back door was opened, and Billy crept slowly out, dragging a bag of corn behind him. He acted very feeble, and it was hard for us to see him trying to reach the bars with his load, for we were unable to help him. But at last he dropped it where Razzle could pull it under the fence and get the corn out on the ground.

All the while we were filling our empty stomachs, Billy lay panting, just outside the bars, quite worn out with his efforts. But at last he told us that both he and Walter had been very ill—perhaps they were poisoned from something they had eaten, he did not know; but Walter was

still in great pain, and help must be brought to him.

During all these days of suffering I had not seen one person drive by the house. I spoke of this to Razzle, and she answered with evident fear, that she believed the water in the creek had carried away the bridge.

Soon after we had eaten, Billy went back to the house, and it was near noon when I saw him trotting slowly across the field toward town. There was a small tin box tied to his collar, and Razzle said he sometimes took messages to Uncle Toby in that box. And this was what he was doing now. Sick and weak as he was, he had started for the village because Walter had told him to go, and he realized the need of help as much as Walter did.

Razzle turned to watch him out of sight, and I read in her eyes the same question that was haunting me, and it was this: If the bridge at the creek were down, would Billy be strong enough to swim across?

All that afternoon we stood at the bars like two old worn out horses, with lopped sides and blinking eyes, waiting to see Billy come home.

I wish it might be possible for me to make men understand how much of real fear and suffering come into a horse's life. Most of us give our masters love, obedience, and faithful service, whether or not they merit it. But few of them ever seem to realize, that a cross word hurts us just as deeply as the cut of a whip; and our drivers never seem to consider how we suffer from fear, when our instinct tells us of dangers ahead which they cannot see.

On this particular afternoon it was surely instinct talking to Razzle and me; and in some unaccountable way, it told us that if Billy got a message to Uncle Toby, he would try to reach the farm that night in spite of the swollen waters of the creek. But at last when the day was almost gone, an idea came to me, and I started at once to act upon it.

I have wondered many times since, why it was that when I took the path across the pasture to the creek, Razzle turned to do so at the same moment. Was she led by the same thought which was leading me?

As we climbed the hill, the twilight began to fall, and when we reached the creek it was almost dark, yet our horses' eyes could see clearly, that our worst fears were true. A part of the bridge had been swept away and pieces of board and logs, were floating between the great blocks of ice that hit against them with a dull thud, crowding them one upon the other, and then freeing them again, as the current bore them on down the river.

Just at the point where the bridge was broken, the water was shallow and very narrow, and the ice and floating logs had so nearly choked the current, that they almost formed a bridge of themselves. But Razzle, who had watched the breaking up of this stream for years, knew that great danger lay in this narrow spot. For at

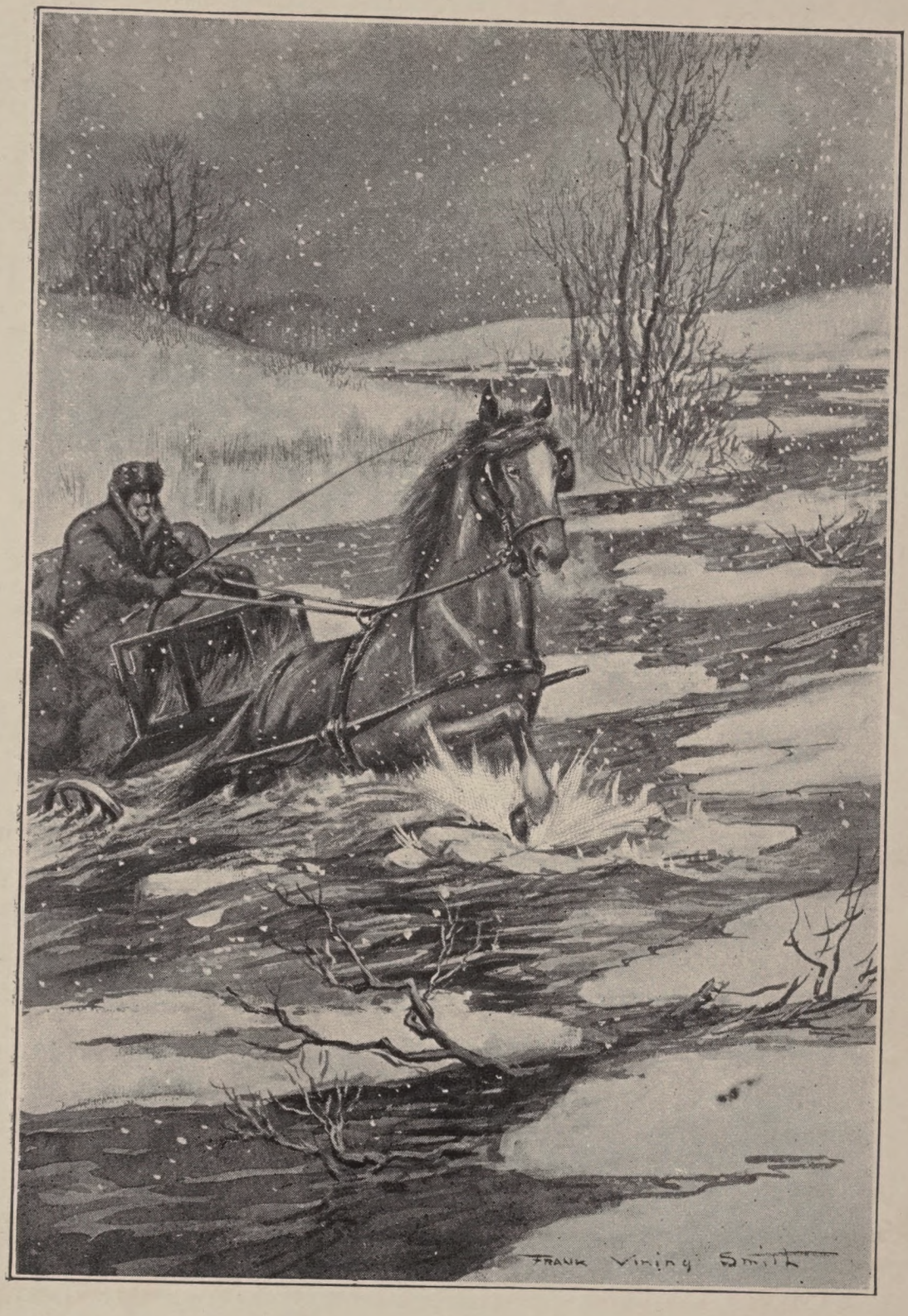
any hour the melting snow and ice from the north, might raise the waters of the creek into a raging torrent that would carry everything before it.

We stood upon the bank looking at the scene with sinking hearts, and dreading Uncle Toby's coming, yet fearing that he would not come, when we thought of the sick boy at home. But we were not left long in doubt, for through the fast falling night, we could plainly see old Colonel picking his way over the mud and ice of the road beyond the creek, and we knew that Uncle Toby was holding the reins.

It seemed an age to us from the time we first saw his broad, tall form, till he stopped on the other side of the creek. We were glad when we saw him get out of the wagon and look closely at the broken bridge; but our hearts stood still when we saw him climb into the carriage again, and gather up the reins. For a moment he seemed to be undecided, and we heard him talking in a low voice; but before we knew what he was doing, he had

struck Colonel with the whip, and the noble beast, understanding every word his master spoke, sprang forward into the waters of the creek. There was no time then, even for fear. Razzle came and stood close to me, but neither of us remembered to whinny, to let brave Colonel know we were near. We knew if he would ford the stream, he must do it quickly; but how could he ever escape the blocks of ice in his way? Then when nothing but failure seemed sure, to our great wonder, we saw him rear on his hind legs, and striking hard with his fore feet he came down upon a block of ice with such tremendous force, that it broke into pieces and went whirling away down the stream. Next a floating board was trampled under foot, another ice cake broken, and so on, till before we could get our breaths, Colonel had reached the end of the broken bridge, and landed Uncle Toby safely.

Close to the bridge there were some bars opening into the road, and to these Razzle and I made our way at once, hoping to



"THE NOBLE BEAST . . . SPRANG FORWARD INTO THE WATERS OF THE CREEK."

get near enough to give Colonel a word of praise for his brave work, and to let Uncle Toby know how glad we were to see him. So we stuck our noses over the bars and neighed merrily. They were both surprised, and our master let us out into the road, allowing us to follow him back to the farm house. This was exactly what we wanted, for the path across the pasture was dark with bushes, deep with mud, and much longer than the road.

We had been so anxious about Uncle Toby during the time Colonel was crossing the creek, that we forgot all about Billy, though we knew he must have reached the village with the note, or master would not be here now. But when Uncle Toby threw back his lap robe, and jumped from the carriage, we saw Billy curled up on the seat fast asleep. He was utterly worn out, and we afterward learned that when he had crept into Uncle Toby's house, he was too weak even to say hulloa, but just rolled over on his back in such a way, that the tin box bobbed

up and spoke for him. And Billy knew there was no need for words. He had been obliged, sick as he was, to swim across the creek, and he still shivered from the cold and wet.

Uncle Toby's first act was to wrap him in a blanket, and carry him tenderly into the house where he was warmed and fed, till he forgot to be sick or troubled any more.

Walter, too, was nursed back to health, and we were all fed and petted and grew as happy as though no suffering had ever come to us. I have often wondered since, why the memory of all we endured in those days of hunger, seemed to die so soon, as if our pride in Billy and Colonel had swallowed up all the sadness, leaving nothing but the joy of their brave deeds.

CHAPTER X

Several weeks after our rescue, when the ice had given place to green grass and flowers, I was feeding on the hill close to the great willow. I had spent the morning by the river, but now as I was making my way to the shed for mid-day shelter, I stopped just to nibble some clover heads near by. I don't know how it ever happened that I had neglected such a bunch of clover, before, for it was very red, and so full of honey that I thought I would try another behind the door which looked just like it.

I walked along as demurely as an old horse could possibly do, but as I passed the door, reaching out my head to nip the blossoms, there was a sudden stampede from inside, and three little fairies charged full upon me, shouting: "Peek-a-boo!"

as they sprang close to my face and stopped short. Of course they frightened me, and I jumped; and since this was what they wanted, they all screamed with laughter.

I had not played much of late with Buntie and Boo. It seemed to me they had been away from home, for I had scarcely seen them since the day of Dazzle's death. I cannot tell you how glad I was to have my little play-mates back again. Boo threw his arms around my neck, hugging me and nearly smothering me with kisses, till Buntie pulled him away saying:

"You're dreadfully impolite, Boo! Stand aside and let Betty see Cap. Isn't he a dear, Betty? You may ride him and drive him while you are here, and he will be a good boy, will you not, Cappie?"

I tried to look my best, for I realized I was being introduced to a stranger. And such a stranger! In after years, this little Betty became very dear to me. But never did she look more beautiful, than when I first saw her on that morning, with the

sun in her yellow hair, and on her yellow dress, and her eyes looking up into mine, with a delight which I had never seen before, shining in their depths.

I learned afterwards that this was her first introduction to a pony, and that it made one of her fondest dreams come true. She was another granddaughter of Uncle Toby's, and they told me that she lived away in Massachusetts by the sea. I little thought then, that some day I should love her grand old ocean, and play with her for hours on its sandy beach. Indeed I had no more thought for the future than other horses have. We have always remembered yesterday, we know what we want to-day; but we have not yet become wise enough to worry about to-morrow!

Betty was standing at a distance, watching me, and looking very happy, though she seemed afraid to come nearer. I had not believed it possible to love any one more than I did Buntie and Boo, but there was something in this little stranger, that seemed to make all the good there was in

me, go out to meet her at once. As she stood there she looked so timid and pretty, that I would have done any thing in the world she might have asked of me, had it been in my power. But she asked nothing; she just looked, till I was so eager to get acquainted with her that I began to stand on my hind legs, and waltz all around the children. Then I bowed to Betty, and offered to shake hands, but she only grew frightened and ran away.

Both children laughed at this, and while Boo jumped on my back, Buntie came and threw her arms around my neck.

"You dear old Cappie," she said, "I haven't seen you do your tricks since Dick went away, and I had forgotten all about them. You are a good boy to show off for Betty, but you must not frighten her." Then turning to Betty she said:

"Come here, dear, and get acquainted with Cap; for we are going to town with him this morning, and you must not try to drive him while you are afraid."

After this Betty gathered courage to

come and pat me, and she pulled some grass for me to eat from her hand. When she spread out her little white palm, it was as soft as the baby chicken's feathers, and I was afraid to eat from it, lest I should bite her finger instead of the grass. So I just opened my lips and drew in the grass with my breath, as gently as I could, not even touching her hand with my teeth. She seemed to understand, and laughed gaily, so after this we were friends.

When Walter harnessed me into the cart, the three children and Billy piled in, and away we went down the hill and over the new bridge across the creek, with Billy barking, and Betty and Buntie and Boo laughing so loudly, and talking so fast, that I couldn't help trying to make the patter of my feet keep time with the music of their voices. A light breeze blew my mane all over my face, while my tail was sweeping the ground when I trotted down hill, and this made Betty laugh all the louder.

That was a merry day, and a pony never

worked with greater joy than I did on that morning.

When we reached the village, Uncle Toby came out, and taking off my harness, he tied me in the back yard on a tempting piece of lawn, which I had grave doubts about. And the doubts grew into a certainty when I tried to nibble the grass; for I found my halter so short that I couldn't stretch my neck long enough to reach even the tallest blades. This was a hard place to put a pony in, with nothing to do but stand and sniff the sweet grass that was denied him. But just as I closed my eyes with a firm resolve to spend the time in sleep, Boo came running into the yard, and taking up a long rubber pipe from the walk, he began playing with it; curling it around his waist, jumping upon it with both feet, and cutting up such pranks as only Boo was capable of.

I was not sleepy any more, for I saw the mischief bubbling over in his eyes, and then there was a swishing as though a river had suddenly started up in the

yard, and a bellow from behind that made me jump clear of the ground. When I looked around, the water was pouring out of that rubber pipe in a white stream, and hitting against the side of a poor little Jersey calf that was standing just within the barn door. He was blatting with fright, and pulling at his rope, trying in vain to get away. But Boo seemed to think that he needed a bath, and kept the water steadily playing upon him, till I thought I would interfere by neighing. I was sorry I did so, for before I could blink, the stream of water was turned on me, hitting me between the eyes, running down over my nose into my mouth and drenching my mane. All this time, Boo kept up a laugh of wicked glee, that made me feel far from happy; and I was just beginning to hope that he would not forget the calf too long, when the back door opened, and a woman came out on the steps, clapping her hands and shouting:

"You wicked boy, to abuse that poor pony like that. Stop it this minute."

And Boo did stop it, but he turned the stream from my face, full into hers, and she gasped for breath and got behind the door. Boo laughed all the louder then, while the water swished down the screen, and lay in puddles on the floor. By this time I was laughing too, for it seemed so much more fun to see her get the soaking, than to take it myself. Just here, Uncle Toby put his head out of a window, and opened his mouth to speak. But the intended words were never spoken, for Boo sighted him, and his mouth was filled with water before any sound could come out. It seemed to me that I heard the calf laughing then, and I heard Uncle Toby say:

"Well, we'll see about this!" The next I knew, he was creeping around the side of the house, and just as the stream struck me again full in the face, it suddenly stopped, for Uncle Toby had turned off the water, and Boo was left looking at the empty nozzle, with a surprise that took all the laugh out of his eyes.

If Miss Jersey calf and I were wet, then Boo was wetter. His hair hung down his back, and around his face in limp strings that looked like the old hen's tail-feathers, when she has been caught out in a shower. I heard Buntie tell him that he would have to go into Uncle Toby's bed, and stay there till he was dry.

But when night came, and I trotted back to the farm with Billy, and Betty, and Buntie and Boo, all Boo's naughtiness was forgotten. We were just as happy, and he was just as dear as he had been in the morning.

CHAPTER XI

Betty stayed at the farm all summer, and the day I have just told you about, was like many a long bright one that followed. I am growing into an old pony now, but as I tell my story the years roll away, and the joys of those blessed summer days come back to me, and I live them all over again, as though it were only yesterday that they passed.

The greatest happiness in my life was given me by the love I felt for my little play-mates. I call them such, for Betty had grown to love me so much, that nearly all their games were shared with me. Razzle must have been lonely that summer, for when I was out of harness I was usually left to graze in the yard so I might be near Betty.

The children played croquet a great deal

"THEY WAITED TILL I WENT AND ROLLED IT BACK AGAIN."

on the back lawn, and after I had watched the game a few times, I began to take an interest in a ball that had a bright red band running around it. One day it came so close to me that I smelled it all over, and then I tried to put my hoof on it. I didn't know it moved so easily, but when my foot slipped off and it went rolling across the croquet ground, the children laughed as though I had done something very wise.

After this it became a part of their play to roll the balls to me; and I soon understood that whenever a ball went too far away for them to play upon it, they waited till I went and rolled it back again. Then they called me their "Mascot," and the name made me very proud, though even now I cannot tell you why it did, because I have never learned what it meant.

That was a busy summer too, as well as a merry one. There were berries to pick long distances away, and flowers to gather; there were basket picnics in far off groves; and in each of these I shared the chil-

dren's joys. Sometimes I drove them to the river where they left me tethered to a tree, while they went in the little steamer, and I watched the white sails gliding up and down the stream, or waited for the sound of their voices coming back to me.

Uncle Toby was usually with them on these trips, and his was always the first voice I heard when the boat came in sight. I had never quite ceased to be sorry for my wickedness when Dick was with us, and I knew that my master was proud of my tricks. So when I heard him speaking to me from the deck, I tried to atone for the past and to please him at the same time, by bowing to the people with him, or waltzing on my hind legs; doing every thing in fact that the length of my hitching rope would allow. Somehow master's voice had become a call to show all my good qualities, and he seemed to love me more because of my love for him.

After the steamer had stopped at the pier, and the children came running out to meet me, our little party would head

toward home, Colonel taking my mistress and Uncle Toby, while I trotted on behind as fast as ever I could, trying to keep them in sight.

During those happy days I had grown to love Betty far more than I realized. I loved her even better than the other children. I cannot tell you why, I only know that it was so.

I remember well how she cried once, when Uncle Toby was taking me home with him and leaving her behind. How she wound her arms around my neck, clinging to me till they were obliged to tear her away. And then as I trotted out of the yard, she flung herself on the ground crying pitifully.

It required great strength of will to keep on down the hill, and over the creek, when I could still feel her soft little arms around my neck. But Uncle Toby's hand was firm on the rein, and I hurried as fast as I could to get away, for there was something in her voice that was calling my heart back to her.

During all the months since Dick left us, I cannot remember that I had been guilty of a single vicious act. I had taken the children every where, saving to the railroad station, for their mother steadily refused to allow me driven there. I had often seen the trains in the distance, when their black smoke and mad rushing sounds frightened me terribly. But I did not run, for I tried to obey Razzle, by thinking only of the children's safety.

The next morning after I went home with Uncle Toby, Walter brought Betty to town to spend the day. There was a little boy near her age, living next door, and she had not been playing with me long when I spied him looking at her through a hole in the fence. Betty did not see him at first, so after a while he got braver, and climbed into the branch of a tree, hanging over our heads.

I know she saw him then, for she started and looked up, but she made no further sign, and worked on demurely braiding my mane, and tying her own blue hair

ribbon into my forelock. It switched into my eyes, but I tried to bear it for her sake. After she had finished my toilet, she sat down on the grass beside me, and began weaving a wreath of leaves which she fastened together with tiny stems. But she took no notice of the boy in the tree. Somehow I felt sorry for him, because I knew that everybody loved Betty, and wanted her to love them. But after a time, when he got tired waiting, he began to whistle and dropped a stone down on her head. Then she looked up, and when their eyes met they both laughed, though I did not see a thing to laugh at. But I have noticed that it seems to be a habit among men, to laugh at nothing.

Well, after Betty smiled at him, he dropped down from the limb and asked her if she were going to take me out for a drive that morning. "For," said he, "if you are, perhaps you will let me go with you. A little girl always needs a man to drive."

Betty seemed pleased at this, and he

looked so proud and tried to be such a big man, that I switched my tail in his eyes, just to see how that would affect him. I didn't wait long to learn, for he cried so loudly that Walter came running out to ask who was killed. I am sure this was very ugly of me, and I knew all the time that I was listening to the bad voice Razzle called the tempter. But I felt so cross I could not help it; then too, I cannot remember that I heard any other voice all that morning. There must be something very strange about these voices, for when you have listened to one a few moments, the other always stops speaking.

I think my naughty act only brought about just what I did not want, because Betty pitied the boy so much for being hurt, that she had me harnessed at once and took him out to drive. To be sure she said she was going only to Uncle Toby's store, but I was very unhappy, and begrudged him even this little pleasure.

It was still morning. The sun was shining, the birds were singing in the branches

over our heads, and I suppose that little boy had the same feeling of happiness I have often felt on such a day; and perhaps he did not know any better than I what it meant. But he thought he did, and he believed it had something to do with the little girl sitting by his side.

I shall never forget how angry I was when I heard him say:

"You'd better let me have the reins, Betty, it's always a man's place to drive. Then you know if anything happens, I shall be able to take care of you."

He was such a little milk and water chap, scarcely taller than my back, and the idea of his taking care of Betty made me feel so wicked, that I decided to give him a chance to try. As soon as he took the reins I began walking all over the road, because there was not a pull, to tell me where I was expected to go. For a long time I was moving so slowly that I could hear everything behind me, but neither of them spoke.

The stillness seemed strange to me. I

thought they must have some serious trouble on their minds, and I began to fear it was my naughtiness. But at last the boy coughed and Betty giggled. I heard him try to brace his feet against the dasher, but his legs were so short he could not do it, and the feet slipped off. Then he said:

"Say, Betty, I like you!"

I tried to listen for her answer, but it was only another giggle. I didn't know where to go, so I stopped short, and turning around to look at them, I saw him sit up closer to her:

"Say, Betty, I like you better than any girl I know! Do you like me? Won't you answer me?"

And then she did: "So do I like you, Willie, better than any other girl I know."

It was not much to say, yet it pleased me so, that I snorted and ran back to Uncle Toby's house as fast as I could go.

Surely the Fates were against my being

good that day, for just as the house was in sight, I saw a man coming towards me leading a huge, black bear, that was dancing all over the road. My blood seemed to leap to my head, and I was so frightened I could not pass that monster. I do not know why I hated him so, but the very smell of him made me frantic.

If some one would only draw a rein to tell me what to do! But Willie's manly hand seemed very weak now, and the lines were so loose they dangled around my legs. I started to run back, and then I felt Betty's strong little hands on the reins, and she shouted:

"Whoa, Cap, you naughty boy. Do you want to kill Betty? Be quiet now."

This was enough for me. I was thoroughly ashamed at having forgotten her safety, and I soon calmed down and began to walk like a sober-minded horse. After we stopped in Uncle Toby's yard, I got up courage to turn and look at them, and I saw Betty still holding fast to the reins, while Willie, leaning back in the cart, was

hanging on to the tip ends of them, with all his manly might. I don't know now why I so disliked that boy, but I am glad to this day that I frightened him.

CHAPTER XII

When the trees put on their sunset colours again, I had begun to hope Betty would stay with us for ever. But one night she came out to the bars with an apple for me to eat, and when I had taken it from her hand, she suddenly threw herself upon my neck and burst into tears.

It broke my heart to see her cry, and I wanted to speak to her and tell her how much I loved her, and how sorry I was about the wicked thing that was troubling her. I little guessed it was *me* she was crying for. But after a while when she grew calmer and could speak, she told me something which made me feel like a poor old horse left out in a blizzard, with no shelter and no corn.

Betty was going home to-morrow, dear sweet little Betty! After the morning, I

should never watch the sun playing in her yellow hair, nor hear her happy laugh as she ran out to meet me. It would not be true to say that I realized just these thoughts, but something in her voice gave me these lonely fears, which grew into a truth after she was gone.

In the morning, much to my surprise, I was harnessed to go to the station. It was Betty's last ride, and she must take it with me. Walter was to drive me; and if I was surprised at being told I was going to the station, I was much more so, when I saw him appear with Billy tied to a string, and trotting behind him.

Now what had Billy done I would like to know, that he deserved to be led on the end of a string instead of running by my side as he usually did? Things were all going wrong to-day. I felt very sad when I went down the hill, and heard Betty saying "good-bye" to the stones along the way, to the sheep in the pasture, and then to the waters of the dear old creek, which flowed as placidly as though

there were no heart breaks, or good-byes, in all the world.

When we reached the station there was no train in sight, and I walked up to the platform with a brave heart. Walter helped Betty out of the cart, and when Billy followed her, I saw that she was holding fast to the string on his collar. Now what did this mean, and why did Billy cling so closely to her; had he grown to love her as I had, and was he afraid of losing her?

Uncle Toby and the children were waiting for Betty at the further end of the station. I saw her run to them, kissing them over and over again, and then I heard the roar of her train coming in the distance. Nearer and nearer it drew, till I could see its ugly face staring at me, and smell the black smoke it was spitting out. I knew I could never stand still and let that frightful engine come close to me! But when I was most afraid, I saw Walter running from across the road, and I felt his hand on my bridle; and then, just that

minute, Betty's arms were thrown around my neck, and she was kissing me. Something wet like a rain-drop fell on my face, and running down over my nose dropped into my nostril and tickled it. Then before I knew what was happening, Betty had run up the steps of that horrible train, and when it moved away Billy stood beside her in the vestibule. She was waving her hand to us and laughing, though her face was all done up in little puckers; and Billy was pulling so hard on the string to get away, that I hoped it would break and let him come back to us. But the cruel train roared its way out of the station, bearing our dear ones with it, leaving us nothing to do but go home and make the best of our loss.

When Walter let down the bars and turned me into the pasture, Razzle came to meet me. Somehow she understood my loneliness, for she tried to comfort me in every possible way. It was hard to talk about Betty and Billy at first, but after a little I learned that it did not hurt so

much when I shared my troubles with her, as when I kept them all hidden away in the dark, by themselves. I remember I once heard Uncle Toby say, that when we saw things in the dark, they always seemed more frightful than they really were, because they were so exaggerated in size.

Razzle told me that she had been at the bars when our mistress drove away that morning, and she heard her telling Boo not to cry for Billy, because dear little Betty had no pets, and she was such a good girl they were glad to give Billy to her. Then too, Betty was so heart-broken at leaving me, that Billy had been offered to console her. I was glad if Betty could be comforted, but I could not help asking Razzle what was to comfort me?

I did not see the children all that day, till toward evening when we went up to the bars, Buntie and Boo both came out to play with us. I thought Buntie looked very unhappy, but I could not tell whether it was Betty or Billy she most missed. And I must confess I scarcely knew my-

self, which one had left my heart most empty. Though it did seem very strange not to see Billy running out to meet us, or to have him barking at our heels as was his wont to do, while he playfully drove us back to the big tree at bed-time.

The little farm house seemed lonely that night, and I wished Betty had never come, if her going must leave the pasture and the yard so still. Everything was unnatural, and even the grass had lost its sweetness, when I tried to take a last nibble before going to sleep.

It was not long after Betty went home, that the village school opened, and the children were obliged to go away from the farm. There was no one left with us but Walter, and I think he missed Billy quite as much as Razzle and I did.

The fall merged into the winter, and once again we were called upon to drink from a little hole in the river, which Walter cut for us every morning. And again we saw the hills and fields covered with their cold, glittering dress, that plunged us knee-deep

when we tried to walk, and kept us housed for days at a time. It seemed as if the wind blew the snow out of the sky, piling it in great white waves in front of our door, and even closing the windows of our hut with blinders so thick, and high, that not one of us could see through them, no matter which way we turned our heads.

That was the dreariest winter Razzle and I ever spent together. The joys of the summer, had but made the contrasting loneliness of the winter harder to bear. We had learned to love Betty, and we missed her, but our hearts were yearning far more for Billy. There was no one now to nip our heels and make us trot down to the river, and no one to play tag with us when the ground was bare. The place was deserted, and we were as sober as two old, broken-down cart horses.

But thus far I have never known any condition which did not change sooner or later. Happy hours seem to pass on, to make room for the sad ones, just as these

cold days of ours at last gave place to warmth and sunshine.

Then when the little blue flowers on the river bank opened their eyes and looked up at us, and the robins were swinging and singing on the branches of the big willow, Uncle Toby came out to the farm with Colonel and the children.

There were no words which Razzle and I could speak, that would half express the joy we felt at seeing our dear ones again. But I am sure we made them understand by our actions, which Uncle Toby said, spoke louder than words.

Boo had grown tall during the winter, but he was just as dear and beautiful as ever. He climbed on my back at once, and laying his head on my neck remained more quiet and thoughtful than I had ever known him to, before. There was something troubling him I was sure. And when I was wondering what it could be, he began to talk low with his mouth close to my ear:

"There's lots of things that are not

nice, happens to little boys, Cappie. You just ought to be glad you aren't a little boy."

I tried to make him understand that I knew what he was saying, and was sorry for him, as indeed I often had been. For it always seemed a pity to see him running around on two legs, when he could go so much farther and faster, if he had been given four. But still I belonged to him, and I was always glad to lend him my legs.

I tried to show him this now, so I galloped away as fast as I could. But it was a wrong thing to do, for he was not holding on, and he nearly fell when I started up so suddenly.

After a little while he made me realize that he wanted me to stand still, and then he began talking again.

"You see, Cap, there's my old Betty teacher, she's as cross, and snappy, as the mud turtles over there in the creek. Only she is not like them, because it's when they snap their mouths together tight, that

you get hurt the worst, if your fingers are in the way. But it's when teacher's mouth is open, that she hurts, and you're likely to get snapped the hardest. I'll be glad when school is done for the summer, and I'm not going back to-morrow, because I will not learn that old geography lesson! I tried for two days as hard as ever I could, and yesterday when I told her that a volcano was a great heap of love, which sometimes broke out into flames, she laughed in my face and turned away. It is no use, Cappie, I don't like her, and I will never be good to her again. I hate to be laughed at, so there!"

Poor little Boo, I was surprised to learn that he had his troubles too, but what could I do to help him? We had wandered some distance away from the bars, while we were talking, and now I heard master's whistle calling us back to him. Boo still had his face down in my mane, so I moved very gently, lest I should make him fall. I had nearly reached the house, when Buntie sprang suddenly from behind

a clump of bushes and threw her arms around my neck. She startled me, but I was walking so carefully, that I did not even jump. Then she began whispering in my ear, and what she said made my heart thump so, that I stood quite still to listen:

"I am not coming out to the farm very early this summer, Cappie. But you must be a good boy just the same, and not get too lonely. You will have Boo and mamma here, but grandpa and I are going away. And just guess, Cap, where we are going?"

Of course I looked stupid, for how could I guess, when I knew so little of the great world beyond the pasture bars, or our little village? Then laughing all the time she said:

"Oh! you dear stupid old boy. I'll tell you. We are going to Massachusetts to visit Betty and Billy. I am so happy, I can hardly wait for the choo choo cars to carry me there. Only think, Cap, to see Betty and Billy!"

Then she let go of me, and rolled in the grass from sheer delight.

The names of Betty and Billy made a great bunch rise in my throat that was hard to swallow over. And it grew still harder when I felt the water from Boo's eyes silently dropping on my neck, for I understood that he wanted to visit the dear ones, too. Well, he and I would be left behind, so we must be good to each other. And I resolved to be such a happy playmate, that he could not fail to enjoy me.

After this Uncle Toby came out to speak a kind word to me, and he told me just as Buntie had, that they were going to see Betty and Billy. He said he would tell them what a good little pony I had been since they left, and would give them my love, even though I had not offered to send it. Then he laughed, though I failed to see why. But he placed me in a very awkward position, and I longed to speak, more than I ever had in all my life.

CHAPTER XIII

It was a long time before I saw my master again. Indeed Razzle and I were eating the brown corn-stalks from the field when he and Buntie came back to us. I was overjoyed to see them, for the summer had been long, without them. When Buntie hugged me, I could smell Billy so plainly on her clothes, that I whinnied thinking he must be near. But she told me presently that he was well and happy, and was living by a great, sparkling ocean, so beautiful that she would like to stay always beside it. She said that Billy had known her at once, and had rushed upon her with a joyful bark, lapping her face and hands lovingly. That Betty, too, was well, and they were very happy together.

While Buntie was speaking, she took her arms from my neck and looked longingly

into my face. In spite of the fact that her voice sounded cheerful, there was something about her that made me feel sad. And when she turned to meet master, who was coming toward us, I saw her wipe a tear-drop from her eye.

Uncle Toby greeted me tenderly, though there was the same strange sadness in his face, that I had seen in Buntie's. But when Razzle came from the grove on the hill, and laid her nose in our master's hand, he petted her gaily, and his voice sounded natural again. After they went into the house, and I told Razzle how sad they had seemed before she came, we fell to wondering if anything had happened to Betty or Billy, and they were keeping it from us.

Then my companion, whom I had learned to love more than ever, since Dazzle died, said to me:

"Cheer up, Cap, there is no use in borrowing trouble. Buntie said that our dear ones were well and happy. What more can we ask?" But even while she spoke,

her eyes looked worried, and I knew she feared as I did, that whatever was troubling Uncle Toby and Buntie, related in some way to me.

For more than a week the children were with Razzle and me, almost constantly. I drove them out, or they rode us in the pasture; and though Boo was as full of mischief as ever, I could see that Buntie had something serious on her mind.

At length one clear bright morning, when the wind was whirling its first gust of yellow leaves up the river, our master sought us as we were going down to drink. The water was cool and sweet, and we drank gratefully. I have always remembered this, for it was a long, weary time, before I was permitted to drink once more from my own beloved river.

When I lifted my head from the water, Uncle Toby surprised me by placing a halter upon me and leading me up to the barn. I do not think he ever did this before, for I had always followed him willingly. If I sometimes played little tricks

upon Walter, when he tried to catch me, they were only for mischief, and because I did not care to go with him. But I loved master far too well to run from him.

We found Colonel in the yard, hitched to a long-bodied wagon, and beside him stood a queer box-shaped thing, made of narrow strips of wood.

Buntie and Boo came out, but when they saw me, they both burst into loud cries and ran back into the house, slamming the red door, behind them. I used to hate that door, but in after years, I have longed many times to see it open, and let my old friends out to me. Even Walter looked sorry that morning; and you may imagine my surprise, when he grasped my halter, and tried to lead me into that box, which looked so much like a cage. I shall never forget Uncle Toby's face when he saw that I refused to obey Walter. The tears were running down his cheeks, but he laid his hand ever so gently on my head, and spoke to me. "Cap," he said, "be a good boy, and mind your master for the last time."

I could tell by his voice that his heart was breaking, so I tried to think what I could do to cheer him up. Ah! I knew, I would do my tricks. He had never failed to laugh at these; so I began standing on my hind legs, and holding out a hand for him to shake. But he only looked sadder at this, and coming nearer he said softly:

"Don't be afraid, old boy, the crate will never harm you. It will only take you safely to your new home, to live with Betty and Billy."

So this was what it all meant. "To live with Betty and Billy!" At first my heart stood still for joy, and then it beat so loudly all the time they were nailing me into my cage, that I could scarcely hear. I only thought of seeing Betty and Billy once again. And not till they had lifted me into the wagon, and started down the road, did I begin to realize what it meant to say "Good-bye" to the only home I had ever known.

When Colonel neared the creek, I heard a gentle whinny, and looking out I saw

Razzle standing with her nose thrust over the bars, gazing at me with a frightened stare in her eyes; and then she whinnied again pitifully. I tried to answer her, but I had forgotten how to neigh. Then as Colonel's feet touched the bridge, I heard Razzle call in a happier voice, as if she would bid me cheer up, for master was sending me away, and it must be for the best.

This helped a little, but oh! I felt as if I were drawing Colonel and the cart along the road myself, instead of his drawing me easily, without any effort of my own. For the load I carried was so heavy I could scarcely breathe.

I shall not dwell upon the awful moment when we reached the station, and I saw that great, black engine come rolling and puffing towards me. It was useless now to make any effort to escape, for I was snugly nailed away in that queer frame, which showed me the world through its slats, while they kept at a safe distance from me. I think I rather liked the

situation after all, for it gave me a feeling of safety to know that no one could come near enough to touch me.

You may imagine my surprise then, when I saw Uncle Toby and Walter, lift me in their arms as if I had been a baby; and before I even guessed what they were doing, I was in a baggage car, box and all, and the engine was smoking its way out of the station.

I shall never forget that moment. I was directly in front of the wide-open door, and I could see my master standing on the station platform, holding a big white cloth up to his eyes; while Walter who looked very sad, was watching me out of sight.

I forgot that I was going to Betty and Billy, I thought only of the fields and pastures of Helendale, and of Razzle who was left so lonely there; of Buntie and Boo, the little friends of my life, and the grey-haired master, who was sending me away to make others happy.

We had left the town far behind, and the train was running rapidly over a track

which I knew would soon border the creek of Helendale.

I caught a glimpse of the big willow, and when we rushed past the bars by the bridge, I saw Razzle standing exactly as we had left her, with her head over the top bar, looking down the road. And I knew she was waiting for me.

Do you wonder that the forty-six hours in which I stood in that cramped position, seemed like a whole lifetime? My mind was sick with longing, and my legs ached because I could neither walk nor lie down, while the puffing and roaring of the engine nearly drove me frantic. Sometimes it stopped so suddenly that I am sure it would have thrown me on my knees, had it not been that my wooden frame fitted me so closely, I could not fall.

The car was warm and made me feel very thirsty, though I cared little for food during that trip. If I could have eaten, there would have been no lack of good things to eat, for every man who came near me, seemed suddenly seized with the

idea that I must be in need of food and drink. It was the train conductor first, who stopped in front of my cage. He looked at me kindly but silently for a minute, and then he said:

"My name is Captain Jinks. Please feed me, and give me a drink. Well, you shall have them both, my good little pony!" and he tried to reach his fat hand between the slats to pet me. But it would not go through, and I was glad of it, because just at that moment I felt so cross, I know I should have nipped him.

Imagine my surprise, then, to hear him call one of his men, and tell him that Captain Jinks must be fed and well cared for. Now how did he know my name, and who asked him to care for me?

After this I was left alone for a short time, and while I was trying to gather my scattered senses, one of the passengers stopped to look at me, and then he said:

"My name is Captain Jinks. Please feed me and give me a drink." And before he had finished his remarks, a round-

faced little woman came fluttering up behind him calling:

"William, William, are the chickens all right?" Then her eye fell on me, and stopping short she immediately said: "My name is Captain Jinks. Please feed me and give me a drink."

The words were scarcely out of her mouth, when the train man who had been called, came with a dish of corn and some water, which he pushed through a little door that I didn't know I had, till that minute. But he closed it very quickly again, as though he feared I would run away; and then after looking steadily at me, as every one else had done, he said: "My name is Captain Jinks. Please feed me and give me a drink."

Well, it seemed as though wonders would never end. How could it be that every person who came near me knew my name at once? And they all thought I needed exactly the same thing—food and water!

But at length after the little woman had found her chickens, she came back to me

again. I couldn't begin to tell you what she said, but I do remember that she made me happier, and that something in her voice was so gentle and loving, that it soothed me, much as Razzle or Uncle Toby would have done, had they been there with me.

Then just as she was bidding me good-bye, she put her little hand through the slats, and taking hold of a piece of paper, which, though I had not noticed it before, was hanging from my mane, she read:

"My name is Captain Jinks. Please feed me, and give me a drink."

She looked pleased and thoughtful as she read the words, and then she said:

"My dear, it was a good kind master who placed that tag in your mane, and I wish I might know him."

CHAPTER XIV

My little friend was gone and I was sad to lose her. But she had solved the mystery, and left me very much in doubt, as to whether I was glad or sorry that Uncle Toby had told the whole world what my name was, and set them to running for corn and water, to fill my poor homesick stomach. For food was the last thing I seemed to need.

After a few hours passed, however, my fellow passengers seemed to take me for granted, and they stopped looking at me, turning their attention to other cages in the car, which held captives like myself. I had been so busy attending to my own troubles, that I had not noticed there were others as helplessly confined as I. But now, by twisting my neck a little, I could see at one side of me a smaller cage

than mine, which had its slats covered with wire netting. And in this cage a big, speckled mother-hen was clucking to her babies, hidden away under her wings. I thought she was selfish not to let them out so I might have a glimpse of their yellow feathers, for they would seem so like home to me! But I think she was afraid of losing her chicks, for if ever one ventured to peep out with a beady little eye, she always scolded and pecked at it, till it was glad to bob out of sight again. Then I remembered that these must be the chickens which my friend William and his dear little wife were looking for, and I was glad the speckled hen took such good care of them.

By and by my neck became tired of twisting one way, and when I turned it the other way, I was surprised to find at that end of the car, a cage much larger than my own. I couldn't see the top of it from where I lived, and at first I could not make out what was in it; but after a while the animal moved, and holding up

her head, looked at me with great, tender eyes, like Razzle's. The glance went right to my heart, and I liked this new neighbour, even though I did not know what her name was, or where she came from.

When she saw me watching her, she looked so friendly that I spoke to her, though I did not believe she would understand what I said. But she did, and answered my question:

"I wonder, you little horse, where you have been all your life that you never saw a deer. Why, we live in parks, and in the woods, everywhere. And when we are free, there is not an animal so happy, or fleet of foot, as we. Men chase and try to kill us, and they often succeed; and sometimes they catch us alive, and keep us in confinement, as they are keeping me. I have tried hard for liberty, but just when I have gained it, they take it from me again. Why, only recently, when I was being placed on board one of the large steamers, a side broke out of my cage, and I jumped through it into the lake.

"The water was clear and cool, and I forgot everything else, saving the one joy of freedom. Out in the lake opposite the steamer, there lay a tiny island, fringed with pine close to the water's edge; and toward this I began to swim as rapidly as my stiff limbs would allow. My instinct told me the boat-hands would follow, and try to catch me; but if I could gain the shore of the island, and hide among its thick trees, I would be safe and free once more. The breath of the pines came over the water to meet me, and thrilling me with happy memories, seemed to put new life into my muscles, spurring me on till I sprang ashore, and was lost at once in the thicket.

"I had made a brave struggle for freedom, and it should have been mine. But wicked men hunted me down, caught and caged me again, and here I am as you see! I don't know what my fate is to be this time. I am trying hard not to wonder. But I cannot help feeling that if I could run wild and free in the woods once more,

and drink from my own mountain brooks, earth would be heaven for me."

When she first stopped speaking, I was so full of her trouble that I could not find any voice to answer; though after a little I was able to tell her how very sorry I was for her, and how much I hoped she would one day be free again, in her native forests.

But there was one thing that troubled me more than her sorrows, and this was the thought that men could be so wicked as those she had described. Thus far I had known but one evil man, and that was Dick. When I remembered him, a shiver of dread passed over me, and I hoped I might never see him again.

While all these thoughts were running through my mind, I was startled by a loud squawk from the mother-hen. When I turned around, a huge grey cat, with gleaming eyes, was clawing the wires on Miss Biddy's cage, and sticking her paws through after the baby chickens.

For a few minutes there was such peck-

ing and clawing, and squawking and meowing, that I even forgot the roar of the engine. Then a train man came and put pussy in her cage, fastening the door so she could not get out again.

You will see there was plenty of excitement on that trip, yet as I said before, it seemed like a life-time. But at length we drew into a dark, covered building, where some men took us all out of the car, and put us on the platform of what seemed to be a station, as big as the whole world. Then I heard a lady say we were in Boston, and I began to feel strangely excited, at the thought of seeing Betty and Billy again.

It must have been an unusual thing for so many animals to be waiting there. A crowd gathered around us, and among them my little woman came to find her chickens. She looked very happy when she saw they were safe, but when she said "good-bye" to me, she left me in a fit of terror, for I heard her say to her William:

"It looks as though we were going to have a circus here, does it not?"

Now I had never heard the word, "circus," spoken since the day I first saw Dick; and it recalled many unhappy memories, making me fear that he might step up any moment and lead me away.

But it was only a trainman who came to me with a kind smile on his face; and calling another like himself, they proceeded to lift me into a new car. For half an hour I heard the old engine snorting and roaring again, and then I was taken out of the train while it puffed away, leaving me alone on a station platform; for not one of my caged friends had come with me.

Even here I had little time to be lonely, for women and children began to gather around my crate, talking baby talk to me, and feeding me candy. One little girl clapped her hands when she saw me, and shouted with delight:

"Oh! mamma, did you ever see such

blue eyes in a pony's head, or such a nice long mane and tail?"

Of course this made me proud, though there was no chance to show my feelings, cramped up in a big box as I was. But just then some one parted the crowd, and coming close to me, called me by name in a tone so familiar, that I answered in a surprised whinny. And when I looked at him closely, I recognized Buntie and Boo's papa, who had been sent by Uncle Toby to meet me.

After letting me out of my prison, he put a halter on me, and I followed him to a stable near by, wondering all the way when I should see Betty and my beloved Billy again.

I had never been much acquainted with the children's father, for as I told you before, he was away from home in the summer. But he was very kind and gentle with me now, and the freedom of the box-stall, together with the dinner and good rubbing which he gave me, made me feel like a new pony. I thought of my friend,

the deer, and like her, I was happy to be free again, and able to use my legs.

Just as Buntie's father left the stable, I heard him tell one of the men that I had been sent to Betty way from Wisconsin, and that I would surprise her, because she did not know that I was coming.

CHAPTER XV

After this he went away leaving me to rest, and I fell asleep. But I was too much excited with the strange things around me, to sleep long, and when I awoke I found my old friend had come back to me. He brought a new brush with him, and after using it on my coat till I was soft and silky all over, he tied some blue ribbons in my mane and forelock, and then he led me from the stable, telling me all the while how beautiful I looked.

The stable men came to the door and watched us out of sight. I felt very happy as I pranced along with my head held high, for something told me that at last I was going to see Betty and Billy.

All Razzle's good teaching and advice came back to me now, and I resolved to do my best, in spite of the strange sounds and objects which began to surround me.

Almost beneath my feet, there lay some steel rails in the road, that looked exactly like those over which the wheels of our train had rushed along. What if an engine should come now? Then my instinct began to play its old game of warning, and I felt sure that danger was near. I tossed my head and looked around on both sides of the road, trying to find something to frighten me, but there was nothing in sight; though just at that minute I heard a strange sound like a buzzing and humming over my head, and then there came rushing towards me a huge yellow thing that seemed to be alive, for it ran along without either engine or horses to pull it.

In all my experience, nothing had ever come to me like this, and I was frightened out of my senses. I pulled at the bridle and tried to run, but my young master's arms were strong, and they held me firmly, while he patted and soothed me as best he could, saying:

"Why, Cap, it's foolish to be afraid of

"THERE CAME RUSHING TOWARDS ME A HUGE YELLOW THING THAT SEEMED TO BE ALIVE."

an electric car. I have a mind to put you in it, and give you a ride."

The tone of his voice, like Buntie's, made me lose my fear, though my heart was beating rapidly when we turned off from the main road, into a narrow street, shaded by beautiful trees. Through the overhanging branches and green leaves, I caught a glimpse of something blue sparkling and quivering in the sun, like the waters of my own dear river. But this was so long and so wide, that it seemed to run into the sky when I tried to look across it. And the air—it was simply frisky! I shall never forget how it blew through every hair of my coat, scattering my mane and tail wherever it wanted to, without even so much as asking my permission. Yet it was not cold, and when its breath gave me new life, and set me to prancing, something told me that this was Betty's beloved ocean, she used to tell us so much about.

At length we entered a winding driveway, sheltered by great trees such as I

had never seen before, and walked up to a dark house covered with vines. I was so excited that I kept on prancing, till suddenly just in front of me a black nose was thrust through a hole in the piazza rail, and I found myself looking into Billy's eyes. For one minute we both stopped and looked, and then we spoke to each other in the old familiar way; only a little louder and a little quicker too, I guess. But our greetings were interrupted by a banging door, and such a scampering as one seldom hears; for it became a race then between Betty and Billy to see who should reach me first.

There was no doubt of my welcome here, for Billy was jumping all over me, barking and lapping my face with his tongue; while Betty's arms were around my neck, and a mate to the dew-drop which she left on my nose so long ago, when she bade me goodbye, glistened there just as it had done on that day.

After this Betty's family gathered around me, and I found myself looked at

and admired so much, that it became wise for me to remember what Razzle had told me, namely—that I did not make myself.

When we left the stable, Buntie's father had tied a card, with some writing on it, into my mane, and one by one the family read these words from it:

"I am Captain Jinks, and Uncle Toby has sent me all the way from Wisconsin, with his love, to live with Betty, and to be her little pony."

I could see that in some way this touched them all, and made them very happy. There was Betty, when she could stop hugging me long enough, standing off to look at me, with the sun shining on her bright hair, while the breeze tossed it about. And she looked so contented that for a minute, Razzle and Buntie and Boo, Uncle Toby and Helendale, faded from my memory, till I became happy with her. Then there were her father and mother, and brother, all crowding around to pet me,—and how could I help forgetting?

But that night when I was wandering

about my stall, the pleasures of the day went away, leaving me quite alone. There were perhaps more than twenty horses in the stable, but what of that? There was no Razzle, and no Colonel, to cheer a home-sick little pony, whose friends were further away than even his loneliness could help him to realize.

I had noticed in the morning that the corner stall at my right, was occupied by an old black horse who was fast turning grey, and was blind in one eye. And now when respectable animals would like to sleep, he was stamping and whimpering in a most discontented way. I thought he was a stranger too, like me, and wanted company, so I stuck my nose out of the opening over my manger, and called softly to him.

He did not answer me at first, so I spoke again, reaching my head over as far as possible, to see if I could not look into his stall. At this he came forward, and turning his head till he could see me with his good eye, and stretching out his long neck,

he made a grab at me so quickly that I could not escape him. I cried out with the pain of his cruel teeth in my lip, and I felt much sadder than before. Sadder and wiser too, for I made up my mind that in the future, I would let older horses seek me, if they wanted to know me.

After this I went to the farthest corner of my stall, and laid down on the clean soft straw, which had been placed there for me. I tried to go to sleep, but the roaring of a distant engine, and the rush of electric cars, only served to make my loneliness greater. I shut my eyes, wishing all the while that I could shut my ears too, and then I began to dream of Helendale.

I could hear the summer waters rippling under the bridge of the creek, and smell the clover blossoms nodding in front of our little cabin door. And then I heard a sound that seemed to make my dreams come true: a quick bark, followed by a whine, and a scratching of claws, and looking up, I saw Billy, struggling to push him-

self through the small, open window, at the end of my stall.

He knew I would be lonely, and so he had come to comfort me. Can you imagine what it meant to a home-sick pony like me, when, snuggling down beside me in the straw, Billy laid his head on my neck and went fast asleep?

I am sure you can, and that you will believe me, when I tell you that I forgot to be lonely any more that night. Why, the first thing I knew, I awoke, and the daylight was peeping in at my window!

CHAPTER XVI

It is strange how differently things appear when the sun is shining. I remember on that next morning, when I found Billy by my side, there seemed to be so little cause for unhappiness in the world, that I felt as if I had been visited with a bad dream in the night. To be sure Helendale was far away, but here was Billy and in all probability I would soon see Betty.

I was not mistaken in this, for I had scarcely finished my breakfast, when I saw her hop-skipping across the stable floor. She carried a heavy rope in her little hands, and as fast as she swung it over her head and laid it on the floor in front of her, she stepped over it, and did the same thing again. It was a funny trick, but I suppose she enjoyed it much as I did my tricks, and I was quite willing that

she should, if she would keep it a proper distance from me. But when she came into my stall, still swinging her rope so near me that it cut the air with a whistling sound close to my ear, I thought it time to object. And I did this by sending both of my hind heels into the air with all my might. But they only hit Billy, who stood his ground and growled at me, till I felt so silly I wanted to ask Betty to tie my legs together, so that I might never be tempted to kick again.

As for Betty she just laughed, and jumping on my back, hugged and patted me till I was happy again. Somehow it was easier to swallow breakfast that morning, than it had been since I left home. And now that I could eat, and was happy, it was easy to remember Razzle's teaching, and try to be good once more. But alas! before the day was done, I had learned that I needed her with me always, if I would succeed.

After Billy and Betty went away, I was turned into the stable yard where several

old horses, lopping on their hind legs, stood looking at me out of half closed eyes. I walked to a corner of the yard which nobody seemed to want, and waited for my new neighbours to show their politeness to a lonely little pony, who was in a strange land.

For some time it seemed as though eastern horses had no politeness to show. But after a while when I had closed my eyes, just to appear as though I did not care, a warm breath touched my face, and glancing up, I saw the old black horse with his head twisted, so that his one good eye was looking straight at me.

I was surprised at any attention from him, but I decided to be friendly, so I said "Good morning," to which he replied:

"Yes, it is a good morning if you feel that way. But after having the tooth-ache all night as I did, it doesn't matter much what kind of a day follows. I'm afraid I was a little cross to you in the night, but you must forget it, because it is only one

of my ways that has turned bad. I believe my ways were all good once, before I had been over-loaded on the outside, and so under-loaded on the inside, that I have learned through suffering to distrust everybody,— even new little ponies.

"I have not lived long in this place, but at my last home, if they fed me at all, it was on such coarse meadow hay, that it wore my teeth all out; and now I must choose between the pain of eating or going hungry. I am sure you will understand that either is hard enough, though the latter would be least likely to pay in the end. I wonder what your name is, for you are such a handsome little beast that your name ought to be handsome too. What there is left of me is called Pete, and I guess that is good enough for a poor work horse, who has been knocked around the world and abused for ten years.

"Patsy, the droopy red-roan in the corner there, who has those big bunches on his knees, is twenty, and he says I ought to be ashamed to look so old at ten. You

see it is not time, but trouble, that has turned my hair grey. And the hardest of all to bear, is that all the suffering I have known, has been needlessly brought to me, either by the selfishness, thoughtlessness, or cruelty of my masters.

"We are a sad lot of old auction horses here in this stable, just waiting for some poor teamster, or farmer, to come and bid on us. And I dare say we have all had so many masters, that it makes little difference to any of us who the next may be. This is why I was so surprised when you came here yesterday. But I suppose it is a matter of convenience to your young mistress to keep you here. Though if I could, I would tell her to look out for the stable boys, for I believe they would turn the sweetest tempered horse in the world, sour in one week."

After this I had a great deal of food for reflection. As I looked back over my life, I felt that I had much to be thankful for. The only unhappiness I had ever known, had come to me from Dick. To be sure

I had grieved at leaving Razzle and Helendale, but now with a loving little mistress, and Billy for my friend, surely if I could only remember to be good, I ought to be happy.

Then I made a resolve that no stable boy should ever turn my temper sour, no matter how much he might tease or neglect me. How I kept that promise you shall see.

CHAPTER XVII

After I had eaten a good dinner, Betty and Buntie's papa came into my stall. They petted me, and fed me with some sweet, square things, that tasted like Helendale sugar, and then they made a stable boy brush me till I shone. After this, to my surprise, I was dressed in my own harness, and hitched into my own little cart. These must have been on the train with me, though where they were all the while I do not know. But I do know that I should have felt less lonely, if I could have seen them near me during that long journey.

But now with my shining coat, and so many old friends near, I pranced out of the stable door quite proudly, and made a dash for the street. Buntie's father was driving, while both Betty and Billy were beside him in the cart.

The men in the stable had come to the door to see us start, and they clapped their hands, cheering loudly, as I turned into the road. I could not help feeling glad, and I pattered down the street as fast as my feet could carry me. I cannot deny that I was excited, so perhaps there is some excuse for what followed.

The road was very hard and it hurt my feet so, that I soon slackened my pace and began to limp. I had never felt anything like this, for at home the ground was soft and warm, and here it was as hard and cold as stone.

After a little my new master understood that my feet were sore, and then I heard him say:

"Why, Betty, Cap has never been shod! I think we must stop at the first blacksmith's, and have some shoes put on him."

It was with a heavy heart that I listened to his words, for Dazzle had often told me the horrors of being shod, and I remembered that he said to me:

"Well, Cap, if ever I am tempted to

kick, it is when they lift my foot to nail on a shoe."

You will see that I was prepared then, for what was coming. And yet when I entered the blacksmith's shop, and saw in the darkness, that flaming forge of fire, my eyes seemed to start out of my head. The sound of the fire, and a smell like burning flesh, frightened all reason out of me. It was in vain that the new master tried to soothe me into obedience, for I had lost all control of myself. I reared and plunged forward, snorted and kicked, and nothing could ever have induced me to lift my foot to the blacksmith's knee, had it not been for an unusual thing which happened.

When I had spent nearly all my strength, and the blacksmith's patience too, I heard a horse behind me calling my name. This was so unexpected that it brought back a little of my sense, and I stopped to listen.

Imagine my surprise then, when old Black Pete walked up beside me, and cock-

ing his head at a convenient angle, looked at me with his one eye, before he spoke again.

Somehow that unmated eye of his, could always say more than any two eyes I had ever seen. And now I found myself beginning to be thoroughly ashamed of my conduct; and I felt more so when he said:

"I took you to be a sensible pony, Cap, but I see I was mistaken. I hope you may never have anything worse to trouble you than being shod. What are you afraid of? Give him your foot quickly, you foolish beast. Why I have stood on three legs a hundred times, and I still have four to walk on! Some folks who never know when they are well off, are always borrowing trouble."

It is needless to say that I obeyed Pete, and lifted my feet one after the other, to the blacksmith's knee, till four little iron shoes had been fastened securely to my hoofs. I cannot say that I liked them, but I resolved to do my best.

When I was driven from the shop, we presently turned into a wide, busy street, where my new shoes slipped on the pavement, ringing out with such a loud noise, that they frightened me, and made me very nervous.

I think I could have managed to forget the shoes, though they made my feet heavy, and hard to lift. But before long, we reached a narrow road crossing a river, over which a bridge seemed to be floating, with no evident fastening on either side. It looked frightful, and when my master reined me straight towards it, I stopped and tried to run back. A car track ran across the water, close to the bridge, and when I felt the cut of the whip on my legs, I forgot everything saving the one thought that I wanted to get away from danger. For I was sure that Betty and Billy would both be drowned, if I took them on that floating bridge.

Thus far I had seen only one electric car, but while I was smarting from the sting of the whip, I heard the same swishing

sound over my head, that had startled me yesterday, and then I knew no more, till I found myself at a standstill across the track, very close to a car that had suddenly stopped, like some live thing, when it seemed to be crashing full upon me. I heard frantic cries from the passengers, and then my new master and Betty were standing at my head. Their faces were white, and I heard him say:

"I wouldn't give a dime for a pony who did not heed the rein! I pulled with all my might, but he went in the opposite direction. Why, Betty, my dear, he might have killed you."

Then down came a whip, swish! swish! across my back and legs, with such violence that I thought it would cut open my flesh.

I suppose I should have stood still and taken that whipping, for I deserved it, — but I could not. Heaven knows I tried, but Uncle Toby had never whipped me like this; and after the lash fell heavily several times, I forgot all my good re-

"DOWN CAME A WHIP, SWISH! SWISH! ACROSS MY BACK."

solves, and bolted. When I jumped, Billy landed on the ground beside me, and the cushion from the seat of the cart flew over my head. This was all I knew, till I reached a field beyond the bridge, where there was some clover growing, that filled the air with a perfume like home.

When they found me, I was feeding quietly, unmindful of the broken cart, or anything else, saving the clover heads, that were nodding and calling to me from every corner of that field.

But I had made a name for myself in the new home, where henceforth I must live under the ban of disgrace. The passengers on that car remembered me, calling me the wild little horse, and Betty was forbidden to drive me alone. Sometimes the stable boys took me out, trying to accustom me to the cars and other strange sights. But they were so impatient with me, while they teased me so in the stall, that I soon forgot to try to mind them, and I became as sour and contrary as ever Dazzle had been.

If at that time, one kind person who understood me could have come into my life, the story I am telling you would have been quite different. But the truth must be told.

CHAPTER XVIII

I was glad when it grew cold, and the first soft white mantle came down to cover the hard blackness of our city streets. How I longed for my little shed and Razzle, and the freedom of the pasture, I can never tell you. But here I was, shut into a stall with nothing to do but to eat and think.

Perhaps you question that a pony could do much thinking, but I assure you that I did a great deal of it, during those long winter days.

Betty seldom came to see me now, for they were trying to teach her to be afraid of me. And as for driving me, I had gained such a reputation that her mother no longer allowed me to be harnessed.

Now what a position this was for a pony to be placed in. Do you wonder that I

lost my temper, and grew gradually more wicked day by day?

There was only one left, who seemed to have no fear of me, and who understood me thoroughly, and this was Billy. Every afternoon found him cuddled down in the straw beside me for a nap, while I stood like an old horse, half asleep, wishing we both were back at Helendale. Yet his coming cheered the long winter hours, and made life bearable for me; though my knees were growing stiff, and I was longing for a run in the open air.

I made few acquaintances among the other horses, for none of them staid with us but a day or two,—none indeed, saving black Pete. And I suppose no one cared to buy him, because there was no mate to his eye, and his front knees bulged out so in the joints, that they were always getting in each other's way when he tried to walk. I don't think he had the toothache after that first night, for he never spoke cross to me again, and I had grown to like him.

But it seemed to me in those days that everything I loved was to be torn from me, and everybody was conspiring to make my life miserable, and my temper more vicious. I shall never forget the morning which brought to me, what seemed the last straw that could be loaded on to my already breaking little back. The day was so dark that lanterns were hung up to light the stable, and in front of the doors a red flag was swaying in the wind. The stable boys went round from stall to stall brushing up each old nag, till his coat fairly shone.

There were a lot of horses in, that day, and they were a better class than our proprietor usually had to offer. But just at sale time, when he was looking as though he expected an extra dish of oats, something in the sky tipped over, and let down such a flood of water, that there was only one buyer who was not afraid of being drowned. My stall was near the door, and I saw him when he came in. I had never seen any one who looked like him,

nor heard any one speak in such a sharp, loud drawl, as he did. One of the boys who was standing near me when the old man passed, put his hand to his chin, and I heard him say "spinach" under his breath.

Well, to make a long story short, there was no auction sale that day, and our visitor went from stall to stall, playing with the horses, and talking to them. He wanted a horse, and he had just twenty-five dollars with which to buy one. But at length, to my dismay, the bargain was made in black Pete's stall, and then I saw my only friend being led from the barn.

Not even Billy was there to cheer me, and when the boy who had said "spinach," walked up to me, and offering me an apple, immediately put it all into his own mouth, as I reached for it, my heart was sadder, I think, than it had ever been in my life. Yet even here there was one comfort, for I heard the stable keeper saying:

"Well, old Pete will have a soft job on his hands now. Whiskers will feed him, and rub him, till he can go without falling over himself!" How true his words were you shall see.

As the holidays drew near, fewer horses came to the stable. Sometimes I was quite alone there, and then Billy was my one comfort, for he seemed to know that he must stay with me.

I heard a great deal of talk about Christmas, but it meant little to me, for I had usually been at the farm during this season, and knew nothing about the doings of the family. But now I think it was a week before Christmas day, one morning when I was blinking in my stall, somebody ran up behind me, and I felt a face laid against mine, and a pair of arms thrown around my neck. It was so long since I had been petted that it was a welcome surprise, I assure you. And of course I knew it was Betty, before I had time to look at her. She had stolen away from her mother, and when she reached

the stable, there was no one there but me, so she had greeted me in the olden way, forgetting all fear, and remembering only that I was her own little pony. She played with me for some time, and she told me all about the things she was buying for Christmas, and then she promised to come again when nobody was looking.

I cannot tell you how her visit cheered me. Why! all the world seemed bright again, and Betty was the brightest and most beautiful thing in it. But she had to leave me, and just as she went out of the stall, I saw her stop and pick up one of my shoes, which had loosened and dropped from my foot. She held it high in the air, then turning to me, laughing all the while, she said:

"O you dear precious thing! I know what I will do with this, I'll just send it to Uncle Toby for Christmas."

The next day, much to my surprise, she came back again, and holding something up before me, she danced all over the stall, saying as she did so:

"Don't you see, Cappie, — can't you tell what this pretty golden thing is? Why, it is just your own little shoe, gilded and tied with a blue ribbon, on to that pretty white card. Mother has written a rhyme, and we are going to send them all to Uncle Toby. Listen and let me read what you are supposed to say on this card. And then she read:

"In the busy march of life
I lately lost a shoe;
And Santa Claus who found it
Now forwards it to you.
And I am sure you'll laugh, Sir,
For while western ground I trod
I cannot now remember
That ever I was shod.
With this I do impart to you
And to the friends so dear,
My Christmas greetings fond and true,
Good luck, I'm happy here!"

She gave me a quick hug, rumpled my forelock all over my eyes, and then saying it was most school time, she ran away.

The men were out of sight, and I fell to thinking. Now what was that she had made me say to Uncle Toby? "Good luck, I'm happy here!" Yes, that was it, but what a terrible lie it was, though perhaps Betty did not know it. And perhaps, too, it was well that Uncle Toby should never know how really miserable I was. Then if only that card would make him happy, I ought to be content.

CHAPTER XIX

When Christmas day came, the ground was bare again, and frozen into hard ruts that made the carts rumble by with a cold disagreeable sound. I knew it was Christmas, because I heard the men wishing a merry Christmas to each other. Everybody seemed to be happy, and the bells were ringing around us, but all this meant nothing to a homesick pony. In the middle of the forenoon one of the boys came into my stall, bringing a measure of delicious looking yellow corn. He held it out for me to eat, and as he did so he said:

"I think you ought to have a little extra feed on Christmas day, like the rest of us, Cap." But when I put my nose into the measure, and was just ready to

grab a mouthful, he pulled it away, and began running around the stall still holding the corn out to me.

Now could anything be more trying than this? And do you blame me for nipping his coat sleeve, and kicking up whenever I could get near enough to him? He kept on teasing me for some time, but he didn't give me the corn, and finally he said to me:

"You're an ugly thing, and I'll tell you what you've got to do, before you can have that corn. You've got to give me a ride." Then he led me out into the floor, and putting a bridle upon me, he jumped on my back without any saddle. It was a long while since I had been out, and I was only too glad to go. So I started into a gallop that any rider might have enjoyed. But one of my feet was bare, and the frozen ground cut it so that I was soon glad to walk. This did not seem to please him and he kicked and pinched me, till I believe I was not responsible for anything that followed. And

all this time I fancied I could smell that yellow corn!

After a while when he saw that I persisted in walking, he stuck a pin or something sharp, into my neck, and it hurt me so that I kicked out behind and began to run. I guess this was what he wanted, for he laughed; and so, deciding to give him all he wanted, if it pleased him — I bolted! Up one street and down another, cutting short corners, into the ditches and out again, up on the sidewalks and down again, knowing nothing, seeing nothing, — I went.

The boy had stopped bradding and kicking me, and was hanging on to my neck breathless and still. I hated the feeling of his arms, and my only thought was to tear them away. When I had run the length of a long broad street, and tore into a narrow one at the end of it, I saw the sunlight galloping in on the waves, and the next I knew, I had turned into Betty's yard, and was running round and round the driveway, with the boy still

clinging to my back. Of course the family heard me and doors began to bang, and they all came out on the porch, while Billy, thinking an old time romp was in the air, barked and ran at my heels. All this time I had been too wild to think, but now when my instinct began to tell me what to do, I obeyed it by stopping so short that the boy flew over my head, and landing head-first on the steps, rolled to the ground. He did not move, but lay so still we all thought he was dead, as Betty's mother stooped to lift him up.

They stretched him on the ground with his white face turned towards me, and I heard them say in a whisper, that he had a cruel wound on his forehead. But pretty soon he opened his eyes, and I was surprised to hear gentle, little Betty, say to him in an angry voice:

"Well, who gave you permission to ride my pony? You're a mean boy, and Cap would never have run with you if you had not abused him. Will you get up now and have another ride?"

"HE DID NOT MOVE, BUT LAY SO STILL WE ALL THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD."

He had risen to his feet, and was looking woefully down over his best Christmas clothes, and at the dust on his coat and stockings. Then he said to Betty:

"No, I thank you, I — I've had enough!"

He had not even the courage left to cry, and I shall always believe that Betty understood, and knew I would never have treated him so cruelly, if he had not deserved it.

You may imagine that after this, Betty's mother was more afraid of me than ever. For weeks together, the child was kept away from me, and I was never harnessed now. My legs were stiff and my temper ruined, and if Uncle Toby could have seen me then, I believe his heart would have broken. Yet could he have come to me, he would have understood that I was not all to blame, and he would have found some way to make me happy and good again.

It is only too true that a horse cannot be judged by what he is, but rather by

what his surroundings have been. I believe Dazzle would have shown a cross temper under any conditions, for surely his lot was a happy one; and perhaps Razzle would have been good under any trial—but I doubt it very much! At all events I ceased trying to be anything but a crabbed, vicious little beast.

The boy who had taken the Christmas ride had forgotten to boast of his horsemanship since that day, and he now kept a safe piece of stall between himself and my heels. But if he was left in charge of me for a day, he also forgot to feed me or give me a drink, though he remembered to make my life as miserable as possible in every way.

Do you wonder the days dragged, and that I thought relief would never come? Yet as I told you once before, there always seems to be an end to everything, and so there was at last to my life in the auction stable.

The beginning to the end came in this way:—it came with Betty and a queer

looking, dapple-faced little boy, who jumped into my stall and on my back, before he even had the politeness to say how do you do to me! I believe he was Betty's cousin, and she called him "Kim." I remember I thought on that first day, that his name was just as easy to get acquainted with, and just as crisp and saucy, as he was. And I never changed my mind, only to think later on, that Kim was far too good for him. In fact, that boy never deserved a name!

Well, it seemed that he had come to visit Betty, and had teased her to steal away from her mother, and bring him to see me. Of course he loved a pony, boys always do!—even though they tease us so. And soon his stolen visit to me became an everyday event, and one which I dreaded more and more.

I could see that he was aching to get me out of doors, but the stable-man steadily refused to let him harness me. And so, after what seemed a long time to me, his visits ceased and I saw him no more,

till the grass growing outside smelled green and juicy, and I knew by the air, that the clover and alfalfa were budding at Helendale.

Billy came to see me every day, but I had not seen Betty since Kim went away.

One morning, much to my surprise, the stable-keeper came up to me, and taking me by the fore-lock, led me out into a yard where several old horses were sunning themselves. I had often wanted to get out here in the air, and wondered why I could not do so. And now as I look back, I think there was nothing prevented my living out of doors, excepting the thoughtlessness of my attendants. Be this as it may, I was glad enough to get out now, and I began to run and whinny, to show the happiness that would not stay hidden away inside of me. The boys were working in the yard, and I almost ran one of them down in my joy at being free to use my legs once more. He just dodged me in time, and then he threw a shovelful of dirt after me, that struck my head and

sifted down into my eyes. Of course it hurt them, and my fun was stopped for a while, so I stopped too, and began sunning myself like the other old nags. I was obliged to wink hard and close my eyes, to get the dirt out of them, and I was just starting in for another frolic when I heard one boy say to another:

"I guess he wouldn't feel so frisky if he knew his little mistress was most dead. I heard her mother telling the boss yesterday, that the Doctor called it scarlet fever, and they couldn't tell how it might end. I'm mighty sorry, for Betty is a nice girl, and she's the only one Cap was ever good to. Guess he couldn't help liking her if he tried."

Neither one of them spoke again, and I did not play any more that morning. Was it always to be the same I wondered, and was little Betty to be taken away from me just because I loved her? Alas! what a wretched pony I was, and what would become of me now?

The days dragged slowly into weeks,

and I had not seen or heard from Betty. Even Billy had forsaken me, for they kept him chained while his little mistress was so sick. It must have been mid-summer before I heard their names mentioned again, and then I heard the men saying that Betty was out, but was looking very badly, and that the Doctor told some one he was afraid her mind was affected, for she had forgotten almost everything.

I remember that morning as though it were yesterday. It was a grey summer day, and for some reason the men were hurrying to finish their work. They were in rare good humour, too, and one of them let me into a front yard where I had never been allowed to run before. It was strange that he should have done this, and in view of what happened, I believe you will agree with me.

CHAPTER XX

You will remember that I spoke of our stable being near the station. Well, on the morning of which I am telling you, I had noticed an unusual stir in the streets. Trains were puffing, and people moving about before daylight; and just when a man could have begun to see across our barn floor, I heard the boy who slept there over night, creep out and leave the door open behind him. He was gone till the old horses began to paw for their breakfasts, and I began to realize that the only thing in my manger, was a little red patch of sunlight. When finally he did come back, I was very grateful for the oats which he scattered all over my crib. Somehow they did not cover the sunlight at all, and when I had carefully lapped up every one, the bright patch still remained.

I could hear the boy hurrying around to get the other horses fed before the master came in, and I also heard him tell his chum, who happened along, that it was a big show to see them unload, and he wouldn't have missed it for anything.

What that show was, I had learned to my sorrow, before the day was done.

In the middle of the forenoon, all the men left the stable, and only the master remained to look after us. I thought he seemed nervous, and I noticed that none of the horses, but me, were turned out.

At length, when I had feasted on some patches of real, green grass, which were growing in the yard, my attention was attracted by the sound of drums beating far away. They didn't stay away, though, for they sounded nearer every minute, and presently I could hear the tramping of feet, as if a great crowd was coming. Then there was loud cheering and laughter, and last though not least, there burst upon my ears the sound of a steam-piano!

Have you forgotten that other piano,

and what happened when I heard it? Because if you have, I have not, and never shall. A steam-piano meant but one thing to me, and that was a circus parade, which might bring Dick with it. Oh! why had they turned me loose in the front yard, to-day of all days?

The noise was coming nearer, and the voice of that horrible steam-piano drove out the sound of bands and drums, rooting me to the ground while it passed, and sending me, after it had gone, plunging wildly around the yard with my head and tail in the air. If I could have jumped the fence I would have been out of hearing in no time, but I couldn't, and so,—well—the steam-piano was taking itself away, and that was one blessing! Why, I had been so afraid of it, that I had forgotten to dread Dick, but now, just as I began to quiet down a little, I heard a whip fall heavily upon a horse's back, and a voice say:

"Go long, you brute! can't you see we are falling behind the parade?" There

was no need to look up—I knew that voice belonged to Dick. But I did peep through the slats of the fence, and saw him riding a sorry-looking little pony, that would have been a good mate for me. Yes, there was no mistake, Dick was here, and so near that had I whinnied ever so faintly, he would have heard, and come to find me.

Can you imagine my state of mind when I saw him? If you cannot, the only way I can describe it to you, is to say that I felt just as our old mother-hen used to look, when she saw a hawk fly over. But Dick's eyes were straight ahead, and before I could realize my good fortune he had turned the corner and was out of sight—he was gone, and gone without seeing me!

My life was hard enough at best, in those days, but on this particular day, I felt as though I were dragging a heavy load of sorrow down hill, with both tugs and the whiffle-tree broken; and I was sure that I must run fast to keep out of

the way, or the whole weight would be on my heels. I couldn't tell what kind of trouble was rolling after me—I only knew I was afraid.

Toward evening when the men came back to the stable, there was a great deal of loud laughter and singing, and I heard them talking about riding and shooting, and pretty girls walking on ropes in the air. I thought the master seemed angry at their noise and neglect, for the old horses were saying they were hungry, and not one of the men offered to feed us.

In the midst of this confusion, two little boys ran into the stable, and stopping short in the floor, looked all around them with scared eyes. Their faces were covered with black spots, they wore no caps, and they both carried lanterns. Neither of them spoke, till the men began to tease and ask them questions, then one of them, who happened to look up and see me, found his tongue enough to say:

"Is she here?"

This made them all laugh, but the master, who came forward and said: "Is who here, my little man?"

"Betty—Betty, I tell you! Don't you know she's lost, and they've been hunting for her all day? She went away with Billy this morning, about the time of the circus parade, and nobody's seen her since. We are going out with our lanterns now to hunt for her, and we'll never come back till we find her!"

The poor little boy was one of Betty's playmates, and he was trying hard to be a man, but when he forgot and burst into tears, they both ran away looking very much ashamed.

Perhaps you will doubt that I understood every word the boys had said, but I did, nevertheless. And not only did I realize that Betty was lost, but my old friend, instinct, presented itself to me, whispering things into my ears that made me tremble with fear. Every time I tried to fall asleep, or forget about my troubles, a cruel voice would call out to me, saying:

"Betty is gone—Betty is lost!" And it was always Dick's voice that spoke the words.

The master sent his men home early that evening, and slept in the stable himself. He was related to Betty in some way, and I know he was fond of her, for I heard him walking the floor half the night. Sometimes he would stop at a little box by the door, just outside my stall, and talking into a hole in the side of it, would ask if there were any news from Betty. I don't know how he could get an answer out of that queer, brown box, that hung on the wall. It was certainly too small for any one to get inside of it, though once I was sure I heard a voice speaking myself; and it said distinctly: "No, they have not found her yet,"—and the answer seemed always to be the same.

I had never learned to love the stable-keeper, for he seldom spoke to me; but I felt nearer to him that night than ever before. And once when I whinnied softly,

he laid his hand on my neck, and said very gently:

"What's the matter, Cappie,—do you know, too, that your little mistress is lost? You seem to be very restless to-night, but I am glad of company, while all the others are sleeping."

I heard nothing more about Betty, after that night. The men had said that Billy went with her to the circus parade, and I feared they were lost together. At any rate he never came to see me, and I was left a forlorn little creature, entirely at the mercy of the stable hands. I was kicked, and scolded, and neglected, for so long a time that I scarcely cared whether I lived or died.

But at length the end of my imprisonment here was brought about, as you will see, by that long-ago call from Betty, and her dapple-faced cousin Kim. You remember I told you then, it was the beginning of the end, and so it was.

I believe Betty's mother had found no clue to either her or Billy, and the poor

woman was heart-broken. She could not bear to see me, because Betty had loved me, and the sight of me grieved her. So it came about, that when Kim asked her to give me to him, she consented at once. This was a good way, she thought, to dispose of me—and perhaps it was for her! though how it ended for me you shall see.

CHAPTER XXI

It must have been late in the summer, when the stable-keeper came into my stall one morning, and gave me a big measure of corn, and more hay than I usually had to eat in a whole day. There was a large grey horse living in the stall next to mine, which the master called his own, and I noticed he fed him too, even though it was hardly daylight. Then he came back into my stall, and began braiding up my forelock and tail, tying them tight with strings which he pulled out of his pocket. I never like to be bothered when I eat, so I snapped at him while he was braiding my forelock, but he only patted me in return, saying as he did so:

"Don't bite me this morning, Cappie, for I want to be good to you to-day. It is the last time I shall ever feed you, and

perhaps the last time I shall ever see you; for after to-day, you and Betty and Billy will all be gone out of my life."

There was so much real sorrow in his voice, that I could not be cross any more, so I rubbed my head against his coat sleeve, to let him know that I forgave all his careless and cruel treatment of me.

After this he harnessed his old grey horse into a long-bodied wagon, put a bridle on me, and tying me to the tail-board, he drove away before the sun had begun to shine.

I tried to jog along as well as I could, but it is hard to follow another horse's pace, and I was feeling very much discouraged, when I saw, what I had not noticed before—my own little cart and harness in the wagon in front of me. They seemed like old friends I can tell you, and they assured me, too, that wherever I was going, I would probably be driven more, than I had been in the city I was gladly leaving behind me.

We crossed a river bridge, which re-

minded me of the creek at Helendale, and passed over some flat open land that smelled like the sea, and made new legs out of my stiff ones; then when we had crossed another huge bridge, over which cars were running all the time, we found ourselves in Boston.

I shall never forget the din and confusion of those streets, and I hope never to be obliged to travel through such tortures again. I pulled at my halter, and ran back as far as it would let me, but the master had been wise enough to hitch me with a rope so strong, that it would have broken my jaw before giving way itself.

Luckily for me, we did not go far in the city streets before reaching a station, where unloading my cart, and giving me a good-bye pat, the master turned us over to a railroad man, and drove away.

Now indeed, I felt forlorn, for I had no idea where I was going. My only comfort was to keep close to my cart; but even this was denied me, for I saw a man take

it by the shafts, and running with it into a car, he pushed it behind some other baggage, away out of my sight. He seemed not to notice me at all, but just to make light of the fact that he was parting me from the only thing I had left on earth. My cart was scarcely out of sight, though, when another man seized me by the bridle, and ran me into a rear car so quickly that before I knew I had started, I had arrived, and was hitched beside a little, grey, Shetland pony, who looked every bit as sorry as I did.

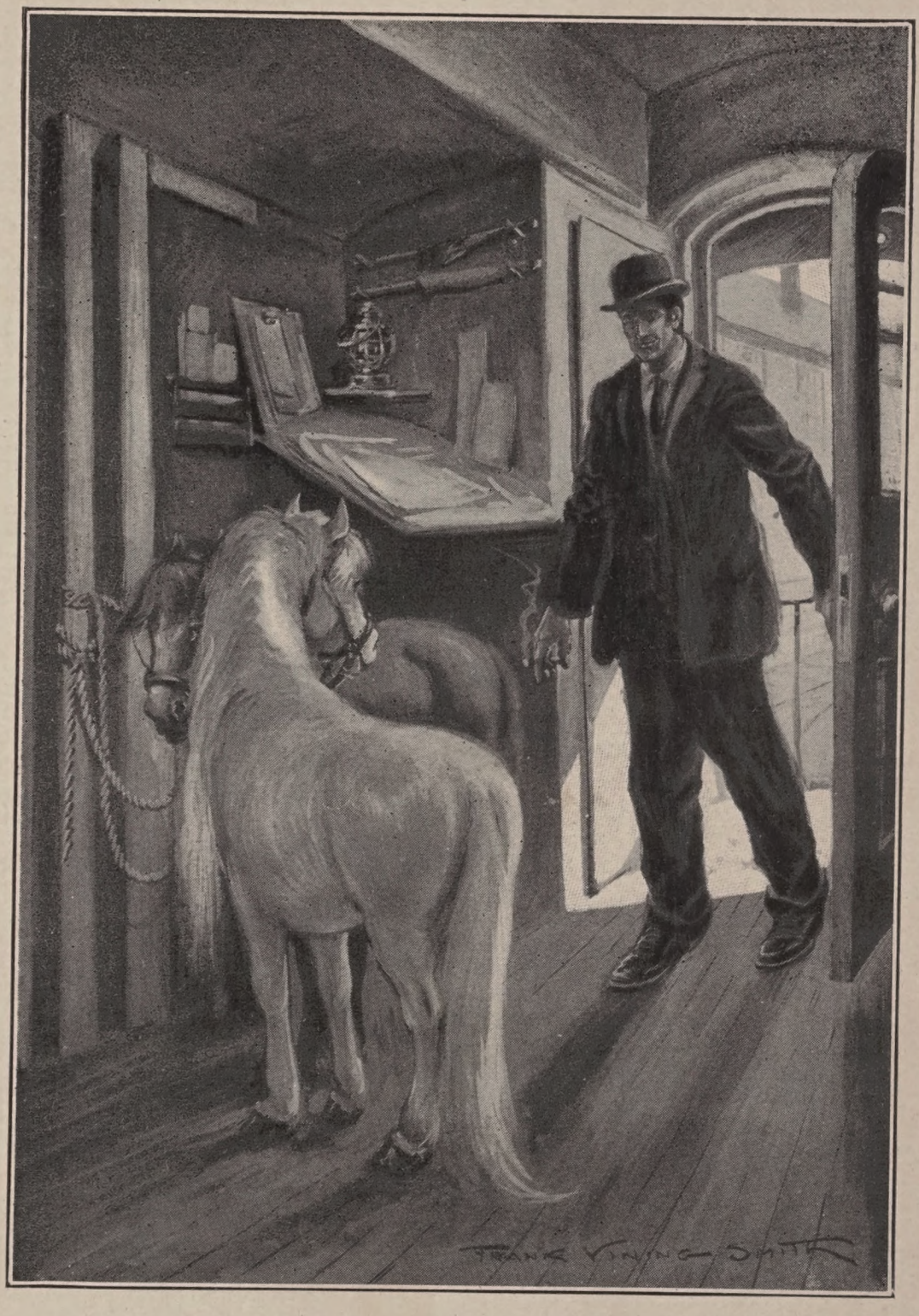
The train started off with the same old rush and roar that always frightened me out of my senses, and I stood there for more than an hour, quivering and jumping at every new sound, believing myself to be the most wretched little pony in all the world.

I heard the conductor in the car adjoining ours call "New Bedford next,—end of the line." Of course I fell to wondering then if I should be put off at this place, and what would happen to me after that.

If this were the end of the line, the sorry pony behind me must go, too. It would be strange if he and I were bound for the same destination, and I had not spoken to him. He looked more forlorn than I, and perhaps I ought to make friends with him; so I turned around and whinnied.

Just at that moment, the door opened and a man who stepped inside, stopped, and looked at the sorry pony and me, with a half muttered oath, and a low whistle that I had heard once before, in the dead of night at Helendale.

There is no need for me to tell you who had come. You remember as well as I, that stormy night in the hut, when Billy had so nobly saved me from being stolen. But there was no Billy here, and so far as I knew, I was at Dick's mercy. He started to come towards me, saying as he did so: "Where on earth did you come from, Cappie? By jove, but you two would make a good pair! I always said that if once I got my eye on you again, Cap, we'd make our fortune together in the circus,



"JUST AT THAT MOMENT, THE DOOR OPENED."

and you would not slip through my fingers, as easy as you did before."

I do not know what might have followed these remarks, for they were checked by the entrance of a train man. I didn't think Dick looked very happy at the interruption, but he said in his crafty voice:

"That's a beauty of a little beast you have there. Where's he bound for?"

"The Vineyard boat, I believe, going to Edgartown. Probably a summer boarder at the hotel. Yes, he is a pretty little feller, but they tell me he's darned spunky! Better keep away from his heels, —he don't seem to take a notion to you, does he?" And the train man laughed.

We had reached the station by this time, and I saw Dick untying the sorry pony; then I knew it was the same I had seen him ride, on the day when Betty and Billy were lost.

All the way down the wharf to the boat, Dick kept close beside me. I say close, but perhaps it would be truer to say,—as near as he dared to come,—for I was so

anxious to give him one good-bye kick, that I spent all my energy on the happy thought of how I would land him, if I got the chance; and so I had walked on to that quivering, shaking boat, without noticing what I was doing. I saw Dick talking to the man who was leading me, and I heard him say as he turned back to the wharf:

"Blast him—but I'll get him some day! Anywhere but the Vineyard, though, for when once he gets there, nothing but fair means will ever get him off again. No trains, only one boat a day, and a dozen officers to watch every feller that steps foot on the Island."

The whistle blew, the steamer creaked away from the wharf, and when I saw there was nothing but water between the shore and me, I was glad, for Dick was there—and I was here.

During that sail, I stood huddled away in a dark corner close to the engine, where I could hear all sorts of sounds that were strange to me, but somehow I was not afraid as I had been on the train. What

I was most anxious about now, was to know where I was going, and who my master was to be.

Imagine my feelings then, when as the boat stopped at a big wharf and I was led out, that dapple-faced Kim ran up and took me by the halter. He seemed delighted to see me, and I wish I might have shared his pleasure,—but I could not. A horse remembers kicks, and pinches, and shoe-nails, that have been thrust into his sides, and he finds it hard to love the boy who has practised them upon him. Perhaps if I could have forgotten the past, my life on the Island would have been easier, and the ending quite different.

Kim had brought his mother with him, and as soon as my cart was taken from the boat, they began to harness me into it. I was glad of this, for I had been shut up so much of late, that I thought a run in my little cart would be a pleasure. But I had already trotted ten miles behind another horse that morning, and the Edgartown road was so sandy that I was obliged

to walk nearly all the way. I think it must have been five or six miles from where we landed, to Kim's house, and I was glad enough to rest when we reached there. We met no cars, or anything else that would frighten a pony, and I was so happy to be away from noise and strange sights, that I think I behaved as well as Razzle could have wished, had she been there. And I am sure that quiet drive in the country, brought back a little of my good humour, and a self respect I had not felt for months.

When we turned into the drive-way of Kim's house, the air blew across the Island clear and cool, while through trees, and over fields, I caught a glimpse of Betty's own blue sea. I knew it was the same she had loved, because away in the distance, it ran into the sky just as it did in front of her house.

If Kim had been good to me, I believe I could have been happy here in this beautiful country spot. I loved the drives in all directions, though the roads were soft,

and when my cart was filled with children, it was very hard to trot, with the wheels sunken to the hubs in sand. When my little legs got so weary that I could scarcely lift them, I sometimes tried to walk, but Kim's long whip would cut into my flanks, till, vainly hoping to get away from it, I would run again—and he would be happy.

CHAPTER XXII

I never saw such a boy as Kim, for trying to be somebody other than himself. There were days together, when he would be Robinson Crusoe cast away on a desert island. I learned to dread these days more than any others, for when he said in the morning: "I am Robinson Crusoe to-day, Cappie," I knew that I should be driven for hours in the heavy sands of the south shore, or till Kim took a notion to be some other man.

I shall not soon forget that wild, dreary spot, which they called the south shore. There never seemed to be a living creature there, saving the great white-winged birds, that flew screaming over our heads, or dipping into the water for their breakfasts, sailed back to the naked hulk of a boat, where they sunned themselves, and

acted glad that the wreck lay rotting there in the sand.

After I saw the place, I had my doubts about its being the same sea which Betty loved, for I don't believe she ever could have talked so much about a thing which proved so cruel as this. Why, Kim told me once in confidence, that we were the only persons who ever came here, and that it was called the end of the world. He said, too, that no sailor dared get near the shore, for fear of the great waves, that rising higher than our barn, would sweep over his ship, until it went under, or was beaten to pieces on the sand.

Just before we reached the waves at the south shore, a narrow river ran across the beach. There was no way to get over it, excepting to swim across, and the current was as swift as our own Helendale creek, in the spring. But it was only after we had forded the river, and were cast away on the beach close to those thunderous waves, that Kim really became Robinson Crusoe!

Sometimes when I was wet and cold from the river, he would hitch me to a bare timber of the wreck, leaving me there to shiver in the wind, while he went out to look for game, or build a house for himself in the sands. Now and then he would return, when, jumping on my back, he would ride me furiously up and down the beach, and into the edge of the great breakers, that threatened to roll over me every minute; then telling me that he was trying to make his escape from the desolate island, he would plunge me into the stream and keep me there, till he saw fit to turn back at last, as he always did, because, as he said, we never could get away. Often if the water was too shallow to swim, I must walk, and then my legs, sunken to my knees in the sand, would grow so cold and lame that I could scarcely pick them up and put them down again, till Kim was home. But he never seemed to think I could be tired, and if I tried to walk, he lashed and spurred me on most cruelly.

If Kim's father and mother had known how he abused me, I am sure they would have put a stop to it.

It is never safe to give a pony to a boy, and let him use that pony as he chooses. Boys who have ponies should be watched!

If the uncomplaining horse could turn about, and heap all the suffering on his master, that the master has heaped upon him, — that man would know better how to treat his horse in the future than he has ever known before.

As the weeks passed by and cold days came to freeze up the world, Kim and I galloped over the country together, just as we had in the summer. We did not visit the south shore so often, and for this I was glad, though Kim had taken a new character which worried me more than Robinson Crusoe had done. Kim was a cow-boy now, and he had two pistols tied to his belt, wore a hat as big as a woman's, and carried a rope with him wherever he rode. I don't know what he was trying

to do, and I guess nobody else did unless it was himself; for when he spurred and whipped me till I ran madly through the village streets, then he would stand in the stirrups, and throw that long rope straight out over the head of a horse or a dog; and sometimes he caught a little boy with it, dragging him along till he fell, or some kind hand took the rope from his neck.

I was in terror all the while, lest I should trample some person under my feet, for he delighted to charge upon any one who happened to be in his way. If I stopped, to save a life, I was kicked and lashed till I learned to dodge people, instead of running into them.

You can easily see from what I have told you, how unhappy I was, here away from all my former associations. I hated Kim, and I could never forget the past. Razzle and Uncle Toby, Betty and Buntie and Billy and Boo, were dearer to me now than they ever had been in my life; and could any of them have come to me in my

loneliness, I am sure I should have known them at once — and been very thankful to see them, too. Nobody loved me here, for I grew more vicious each day. I heard Kim's mother say she was afraid to have him ride me, for she expected I would kill him, every time he went out with me. There was not a child in the neighbourhood who dared come near me, and not a horse in the barn for me to speak to, — not even a dog!

The truth was, that since I came to the island, I had never done anything wicked, saving when I had been obliged to defend myself from Kim's cruelty. No one knew this, though, for he was sly, and the distrust and fear of every person who came near me, were fast killing all the good left in me.

In many ways I was more comfortable here with Kim, than I had been in the boarding stable, though there was much more to try me. He was cruel, and his parents hated me, and I was so homesick for my old playmates that life was hard

enough to bear. Yet the worst was still to come!

The winter had dragged itself away, and some tiny yellow chickens were running around the barn floor. I had not been out of the stall for days, because as Kim said, the great umbrella overhead had shut up again, letting all the water in the sky fall down on us. It pattered on the roof of the barn with such a steady, sleepy sound that it left nothing for the chickens and me to do, but go to sleep, and stay till feed-time, or the sun came out.

When at last I noticed the pattering on the roof had stopped, I opened my eyes and found that the world outside was all bright, and Kim had come home from school to give me my dinner. I suppose he had been shut up for so long that he felt cross just as I did — and perhaps he wanted something to happen — just as I did, too. If so, then we should both have been happy over what followed.

After he gave me some hay, he came

into my stall and began scattering straw under me for fresh bedding. He asked me to "stand over," but his voice was so disagreeable, that it made me feel contrary, and I didn't obey. He spoke again in the same tone, and with the same result, and then he did the most cruel thing that was ever inflicted on a pony — he stuck the pitch-fork into me!

It hurt me so I can feel it now, while I am telling you about it. I don't know why I did not hurt him in return, but I seemed dazed, and just stood there quietly waiting to see what was coming to me next. After this he went into the house for a little while, and when he came back, he brought a saddle which he put on to me, strapping it so tightly over the wound left by the pitch-fork, that it made sharp pains run all down through my leg. Can you imagine what a condition I was in, and what my state of mind was when he rode me out of the barn?

Kim had left his cow-boy clothes at home on that ride, and as soon as we passed

through the gate, he struck me a sharp blow across the ears and said:

"Go long, Cap, you're a lazy dog. Put for the south shore quick, for the sun is out, and I am Robinson Crusoe to-day!"

I heard his words but my temper was up! Perhaps I did not reason consciously, that in my present state of mind it was quite unlikely that either Kim or I, would reach the south shore that day. But I know now how impossible it would have been for me to have taken him carefully there, with the saddle hurting my side as it did, and with his constant yelling and striking me.

When I reached the main road, I broke into a gallop, and then I began to run. He was not afraid of my running, so he laughed and lashed me the harder. We had almost come to the end of the village street, where a road leading to the south shore, turned sharply off to the right. Kim yanked the right rein of my bridle, and I sprang around the corner, to find myself suddenly wedged between a heavy

ice-wagon and a man who was riding rapidly on a bicycle. If I could have stopped in my frantic run, all would have been well, but it was too late — I had lost control of myself. One plunge into a wheel of the ice-cart brought me back so violently on to my hind legs, that Kim was tossed suddenly against the man on the bicycle, and they both rolled into the mud of the ditch. Of course they all yelled "Whoa!" while I was trying to get away from the cart, and make a dash for freedom. But the bicycle was under my feet, I was too wild to guide myself, and the loud cries brought a man out of the store, who ran and grabbed my bridle. I felt the strength of an iron hand, and the fear of an iron will, flashing along the rein, as quivering in every nerve, I stood still, to find myself looking into the eyes of the man whom I dreaded most in all the world — Dick!

How he came or where from I never knew. It was enough that he was here. No one realized that we had ever met

before, and when Kim burst into tears, the bicycle man reeled off a lot of words which didn't seem to have any meaning to them at all, and then he said:

"If I owned that blasted beast, Kim, I'd shoot him before night." And the ice man said: "So would I."

All this time Dick had kept hold of my bridle without speaking, and now when he began to talk, his words struck terror to my heart. I heard him offering money to buy me, and Kim was in just the right mood to accept his offer. In less time than it takes to tell you about it, I was sold to Dick and he was leading me away.

CHAPTER XXIII

I was placed in a stable that afternoon where there were a lot of other horses, who looked kindly at me when Dick led me past their stalls. It was so long since I had been where there was any one to speak to, that I was glad to feel them near me during this, my greatest grief.

I believe now as I look back over my life, that I had always feared this hour, for my instinct had whispered the warning that, sooner or later, Dick would succeed in carrying me away. There was something in the man which made even a horse realize his power to obtain and control whatever he most wanted.

The horses here in the stable seemed a happy comfortable lot, and after Dick left me in my stall, I was fed and cared for, but I did not see him again till

the next morning, when he came to lead me away. It was strange how quietly I followed him even when he turned to go down the steep drop leading to the steamer, and how, scarcely realizing what I did, I walked into the stuffy corner that I had occupied on that same boat when I had come to live with Kim. I had forgotten my desire to feel Dick against the end of my heels, or even to pull at my halter to get away from him. In some mysterious way he had become my master — and as much as I hated him, my will was lost in his. Perhaps it was my old friend instinct again, telling me that he was cruel, and my life would be easier if I obeyed him.

During our trip on the boat, Dick left me quite alone, and I was thankful for this. I did not mind the noise of the engine, or the strange trembling all around me, as I had done before. In fact nothing in my surroundings worried me, for I seemed to be dazed, and capable of remembering only one thing, which was that I

belonged to Dick now, and he had a right to do whatever he chose with me.

After several hours I was taken from the boat and put into a railroad train for a short ride, and then after being led to another wharf, I was stowed away in a musty corner of another boat, where I remained all night.

When morning came and the steamer landed at a wharf I was pulled ashore by Dick, and hitched behind a cart that happened to pass our way, Dick mounting the seat with the driver, while I trotted on behind. Well do I remember the journey which followed. There were tufts of sweet-smelling grass growing by the roadside, and the tiny leaves on the trees were as green and tempting as the grass. Birds were calling to us from everywhere, as we passed through woods that were thicker and greener than any I had ever seen. I was just wondering where we were, when the old man driving the cart turned to Dick and said:

"Glad to git home be yer, Dickie?

Hain't no such woods as these anywhere outside the wilds of Maine. Here's where yer git yer pure country air, free and unadulterated! ''

He spoke in a queer voice that squeaked like an old barn door which was hard to open, and it gave me the feeling that somewhere, sometime, I had heard the same voice before.

A wave of loneliness came over me, covering even the beautiful morning, and the grass, and trees, so I could not see them. I seemed to be back in the boarding stable with Betty and Billy near me, where there was one kind horse friend, who never forgot to be good to me. And the squeaking voice had something to do with a grief which followed.

I trotted along for miles, wondering and trying to remember, and then a strange thing happened. I could never tell why I acted as I did, but suddenly I threw up my head, scented the air, and whinnied with all my might. To my surprise the horse in the shafts stopped short,

and answering my whinny in a joyous tone, almost turned around in his harness trying to see me. I could tell what he was doing by the motion of the wagon, but the men on the seat hid us from each other.

There was no need to see, for the voice was enough. I knew, and so did he! The old man chirruped, and pulling on the reins said: "Ger lang, ger lang!" but his horse was loth to start; though when once he did, he trotted rapidly as if he were anxious to make the end of his journey come quickly, whinnying every few minutes to see if I were following.

That was a hard trip, which took us from early morning till noon, before we reached our destination. My legs grew very tired trying to follow the other horse, though two or three times we stopped in the woods, while the men drank from a bottle, and lit their pipes. It was only for a minute but it rested me some, and then I stood the journey better because, in spite of my dismal outlook for the fu-

ture, an old friend had come back into my life, and I was glad. The sun climbed higher as we trotted along, until it looked straight down upon us from overhead. The birds had stopped calling to us, just as I once heard Buntie say they always did, when it grew hot, because they were hiding in some leafy nook, and keeping very quiet, so the sun could never find them. But at length as we went further into the country, passing beautiful fields where clover would be blooming later, and going through wonderful woods, we stopped in front of a lane which seemed to lead nowhere but into a dense forest.

Both men got out of the wagon, and the old farmer, who still wore the bunch of straw sticking out from his chin, led me up beside his own horse, where he looked me over with a great deal of interest. It was only a short time that I was allowed to stand there, but it was enough to make sure that the horse in the shafts, was twisting his neck around so he could see me, and that I was looking into the

one gentle eye of old black Pete. We both spoke at once, and I know we both were glad. I was just about to tell him how well and happy he was looking, when Dick grabbed my bridle, and the old farmer picking up his reins, called to Pete to go on. I could see Pete keep his one eye upon me, till a high place in the stone-wall came between us, and then he whinnied back that we would meet again, for he did not live far away.

There was nothing left now for me to do, but walk demurely up the lane behind Dick. As far as I could see ahead of us, a grass-grown path led away into the shade of huge, dark green trees. And just behind a bend in the path, almost into the woods, overhung by one of those whispering trees, I saw a wretched little barn, or hovel, half standing, half falling — yet evidently holding something of interest to Dick, for he jerked my bridle rein and said:

"Come on, Cap, cheer up, we are almost home." Then he whistled that low,

threatening note of his, which always made me feel as if I wanted to gallop away, till I had put the whole pasture between him and me. But he held me firmly by the halter, even though my last hope of escaping him had gone. Dick seemed to feel just as I have many a time at home, when after a long journey I saw the barn door open, and knew a nice supper was waiting there for me. The nearer he came to the house the faster he walked, as if he expected something pleasant about to happen, so that I had to trot a little to keep up with him.

There was a tall lilac-bush in front of the house, which hid the door from us, and as we passed around the bush, and Dick started into a run, the figure of a small man, wearing blue clothes trimmed with bright buttons, appeared in the doorway. He stood looking at us for a minute, and then lifting to his shoulder a heavy gun that he held in his hand, he came slowly forward to meet us.

Dick scarcely noticed him, and turned

out as though he would pass without speaking. But the old man stopped, and putting his hand gently on my head said:

"Yer ain't a goin' ter take this little horse in there be yer, Dickie? She's better, but she's sleepin' now, and mebby he might frighten her!" Dick yanked again roughly at my rein, and muttering something about thanking folks to let his family alone, and mind their own business, he started on. But the little man was not to be trifled with, as calling, "Halt!" in a clear loud voice, he jumped so quickly into Dick's path that it startled me, and I jumped back.

I saw then when he came nearer to me, that he was not so old as he had seemed, and that for some reason my high-handed master had stopped when he told him to, as though afraid of him. "Dick," he said very quietly, "You are to hitch that animal outside while I go in and wake her up, as gently as I can, to tell her you have come. I'm thinkin' she won't be over-joyed at the news. It's

a nice kind of a father you be, any way, ter leave a child like her alone, with nothin' ter eat, and she not able ter help herself ter that. If yer ever do it again, I'll take her home with me, or give her to Aunt Sally, and you'll never git her back."

Then he took me by the bridle, and led me to the house, leaving Dick to whimper something about his old friend Peter must be good to him, because he was a broken-hearted father.

While Peter was tying me to a little iron ring on the door-step Dick seemed to brighten up. He smiled and patted my neck as he said to Peter: "Hurry up now, old man, if yer must wake her up yerself! I have an idea that somethin's goin' ter happen when she claps her eye on this little beast."

I could hear Peter moving about inside for some minutes, while Dick stood on the step waiting, with a look in his eyes as though his whole life depended on what was about to happen.

I heard the voice of a child crying, and Peter talking to it just as Uncle Toby used to talk to Buntie and Boo, — so low and gentle — and then Peter called:

"Come in, Dick. She's awake!"

The strangest thing in all my life took place now, when Dick led me over the steps into that miserable hovel he called home. It was a large low room, over one end of which a scaffold had been built to stow away hay or grain; and beneath this scaffold, the little green tufts of grass were springing up from the ground, between the naked floor beams. It was here in this corner, where some of the beams had rotted away, that I was hitched and left to look upon my new surroundings.

Across the other end of the room a board floor had been laid, and in the corner opposite me, I saw a child lying on a couch in front of the one window which had not been broken and boarded over. Little dots of sunlight fluttered into her golden curls, that were trying to run away over the pillow, but had got hitched together

here and there, and lay like tangled fleece, caught on the bushes in the pasture! Her face was turned away from me and her arms were clasped tightly around the neck of a huge dog, who had thrown himself across her as though to protect her from any intruder. She kept her eyes away as if she were afraid to look at Dick, who was standing very near her now; but I did not need to see more, I knew, I knew! and then I spoke to her three times, so joyously that my voice filled all the room, and startled the old dog, as though some one had suddenly pulled his tail. He freed himself with one jump from the child's arms, looked at me just for an instant, and then he was on my back, or jumping up from the ground to lap my face, or nipping my nose, barking wildly, and playing such antics as only my old friend Billy, had ever dared to play with me.

All this time, while Billy was trying to make me understand how glad he was to see me, Dick and Peter were watching

Betty. She sat up when I whinnied, and looked at me, and for one brief moment she held out her hand and laughed. Then Dick spoke to her, but at sound of his voice all the light died out of her eyes, and she laid back on the pillow without speaking.

I could never tell you how disappointed I was, for I wanted her to get up and come to me. She still kept her eyes on me, and there was no doubt but this was Betty. Yet even while she looked at me, I had the feeling that she did not see me, or if she did, she had wholly forgotten that I was Captain Jinks, or that we ever rode and played together over the fields of Helendale.

CHAPTER XXIV

After a while Betty turned her head away from me, when calling Billy back to her, she nestled down beside him and seemed to sleep. Dick drew a heavy breath as if he had been trotting up hill, and then he covered his face with both hands. Peter sat on the floor close to Betty's couch, looking at Dick, but he did not speak. It was a long time to me that they sat like this, while I had nothing to do but wonder at the strangeness of Betty's eyes, and to watch Peter. I could not help doing the last, even if I tried, for there was something in the man's face which affected me just as Uncle Toby's did the first time I recognized him; and something of the same love and trust passed into my life, never wholly to pass

out again. In all the months of loneliness and abuse which I had suffered, here was the first person who had come to me whom I could love instinctively, and wish to serve.

It was strange how quickly I trusted Peter, for he was a funny little man wholly unlike any one I had ever seen. And he looked quaint enough now as he sat there on the floor, with his short blue-covered legs stretched out, and the huge old gun lying across them. There was a queer bulging look, too, about his back, as though he carried a heavy pack on his saddle, — but one forgot all these things because his face and voice were so kind and gentle.

At length the long silence was broken by Peter, who bent over Dick to pull his hands down from his face:

"Cheer up, Dickie, mebby things hain't so bad as they seem; and if they be, it's nobody's fault but yer own I reckon, so stand up and bear it like a man. Yer always was a chicken-hearted soldier,

Dick, and the's not one of yer old neighbours around here who knows anything about yer life. Jest as we think we've got yer, yer off again, and it always seems ter me as though yer go back into the army enlistin' on the devil's side, till yer find he's poor pay, and then yer march home, expectin' yer friends ter supply yer wants somehow, and start yer out in the same service again. I tell yer, Dick, it hain't the way ter do!

"We ain't never asked yer many questions about yer life away from home, but I'm goin' ter ask yer things now, because I think I ought to. It's about this little girl here, this child you say is yourn. Now so far as I can tell, nobody ever heard of your gettin' married. But if you did, and this little critter is yourn, then the's one thing I'm certain about, Dick, and it is that the mother who rocked her in her arms, was made out of different stock from what you was; and I hain't afraid ter bet right here, that the' ain't one drop of your blood er runnin' in that child's

veins. Come now, own up to it—or I'll make yer sorry if yer don't!"

Peter's voice had lost its gentle tone, and I think a person out by the lilac tree could have heard every word he spoke.

I learned afterward, that when Dick took two or three drinks from the bottle he carried in his pocket, that he always laughed and talked a great deal at first, though later he became so cross we were terribly afraid of him, and tried as best we could to keep out of his way, and not offend him. To-day he had taken just liquor enough to feel good natured, and now as Peter looked into his face he responded in spite of himself, just as I did when Peter looked at me.

Dick got up, and stooping over Betty tried to stroke her curls, but when Billy growled fiercely, he drew back, with a laugh that had something in it not altogether happy. When he sat down again, a change had come over his face, and I knew by his voice that the words he spoke were true:

"It's no use, Peter, you're all against me. Even that pony over there kicks and bites me every chance he can get, the dog growls when I go near Betty, and she won't look at me or let me touch her. They say the's something wrong with a man, when children and animals hate him; and I guess it's so true in my case, that I'd better own up.

"You see, Peter, it's this way. Some time ago when I was travelling with a circus, away out in Wisconsin, I met that pony on the street. He was scared almost to death of the steam piano, and I guess if I hadn't a come to the rescue, mebby he would have killed the children drivin' him. Somehow I took a fancy to that critter, and I found out where he lived, and tried to steal him in the night. I would have got him and carried him off in the circus train, but that dog a layin' there side of Betty put himself in my way, by making me understand that 'twas safer to show him my back than my face;

and that the safest thing to do, was to use my heels.

"Somehow the company got away from town that night without me, and a few days later I shaved off my beard, so the children wouldn't know me, and hired out with Captain Jinks' master to take care of his horses. I don't think the children or the critters on the farm loved me any more than I did them, but I was there for just one thing, and that was to own this pony. It was nobody's fault but mine that I didn't get away with him, for I tipped the bottle too many times one fine morning, and I killed a valuable pony, because I did not know what I was doing. After that I lit out and forgot all about my western friends, for a long time. Then one day I was somewhere with the circus, and I must have been drinking a good deal, for I wandered off into the woods near the circus field, hoping to get a nap.

"I can't remember much of what hap-

pened, only that I came across a child and dog asleep. The child was strange to me, but the dog was Billy. He knew me at once and growled at me just as he always had, when I worked for his western master. I owed him a grudge of long standing, and I suppose I was just ugly enough to carry away that little girl, to worry him. I wonder that Billy let me do it, but I suppose he knew she was lost, and hoped I would take her home. I wonder, too, that I allowed him to follow, but a man does strange things when his head is fired with drink.

"I must have kept Betty out of sight, for when I came to my senses several days later, we had been put off the train at Rockland. One of the boys who brought us home, said nobody knew where I picked up my family so suddenly, but since I was good for nothing so much of the time, they decided to send me home. He said too, that I confessed the child was mine — so I have stuck to it ever since.

"The fact is, Peter, I don't know who

Betty is, and she doesn't seem to know herself, anything beside the fact that she was called Betty. I can't tell whether she is foolish, or has had some terrible sickness that has taken away her memory. If I could find out who she is, mebby I could get a reward for her, but as it is, it's pretty hard on me, for I can't afford to feed her, and I don't dare to turn her over to any officers, because they are looking for a feller about like me, and have been, for some time. My only clue to her relatives, is the dog, and I'm afraid to let his master know where I am — he's looking for me too!

"It happened that a few weeks after I brought Betty and Billy here, I was called away on a little matter of business. For once, luck seemed to be with me, and it gave me a jolly surprise too! When I walked into a baggage car on a New Bedford train, imagine my amazement to find that pony there, hitched near the door, and looking at me as though the very sight of me froze him stiff. Why it took my

breath away, for I didn't know he was anywhere this side of Wisconsin. It didn't take me long though, when I found it really was Cap, to put two and two together, and decide that his being in the east had something to do with Betty and Billy — and perhaps his present journey was on account of her being lost.

"After that I followed him to the Vineyard boat, and found out that he was booked for the Island. My heart went down then, for I knew I could never steal him away from that place. A thief hasn't much use for a town that is out to sea, and has only one boat a day to help him away with his booty.

"I came back here again that night, and I thought Betty seemed a little brighter than she had been. Her eyes had a different look in them, and when I spoke of Captain Jinks to her, there was a flash of light in them that set me thinking. Somehow I got a notion that if I could bring that pony here, and put him suddenly before her, it might make her

remember, and tell who she was, and where she had known Cap.

"Well after a long time, I carried out my plan, and you see what the result is. Do you blame me for being disappointed when I spent real money for that little beast?"

Dick turned here, and gave me such a look of hatred that I longed to tell him that I wore shoes now, and to let him feel how hard they could be. I heard Peter asking him some questions about my old master, and where he lived, and then I saw Dick turn upon him as though suddenly angry, while he ended up by saying:

"When you find that out, I'll be older and sillier than I am now! Perhaps you would like to know, so you could write to him and tell him all about me and my family. I tell you they are mine now, and if there's any money to be had out of them, that's mine too, and not yourn."

Peter made no reply, but leaned over Betty then, and while he patted her curls,

Billy reached up and licked his hand lovingly. Afterwards he went away, and just as he passed me, I heard him say:

"Now don't yer worry, little ones, fer we'll see that yer taken care of."

As he tramped slowly out the lane carrying his heavy old gun, and I heard him going farther and farther away, I realized that my heart grew fainter, with each of his far away steps.

CHAPTER XXV

I do not think Betty knew when Peter left the house, for she did not open her eyes, but seemed to sleep on till the sun had gone away from her curls and black shadows began to fill up the corners of the room. Dick was very much excited after Peter went away, and he walked the floor for some time till his feet were too tired to take him where he wanted to go, but just wound themselves in and out around each other, so that he walked one-sided, and finally dropped on the floor in a heap, where I heard him breathing as heavily as a pig all night long.

When Dick went to sleep, Billy became very wide awake, though he still lay close to Betty on the couch; and every time he heard a sound outside he growled, while he looked over to me at the same time

wagging his tail as much as to say: I am not growling at you, for we are friends you know, old friends tried and true! You can never imagine how safe it made me feel to know that he was watching Betty with a tender care that would keep all brutal treatment from her. But who would be a mother to the dear child, and who would feed her if Dick kept on sleeping all night? This thought clung to me till I began to realize that I was hungry myself, and night was turning every thing black in the woods around us. The birds had been having a great frolic in the pine trees behind our house, but they had all gone to sleep with Betty, now, saving one who seemed to be standing on the roof over my head, pouring out a low, hungry song, that sounded like the swish of a long whip, up and down, up and down through the air. It was the loneliest sound I ever had heard, and it made me ask more and more: "Who will feed Betty now, who will care for my little mistress?"

If I could have spoken so Dick would

understand, I should have screamed this question into his ear; as it was I had to be content with saying to Billy: "Who will feed Betty and me, if he sleeps all night?"

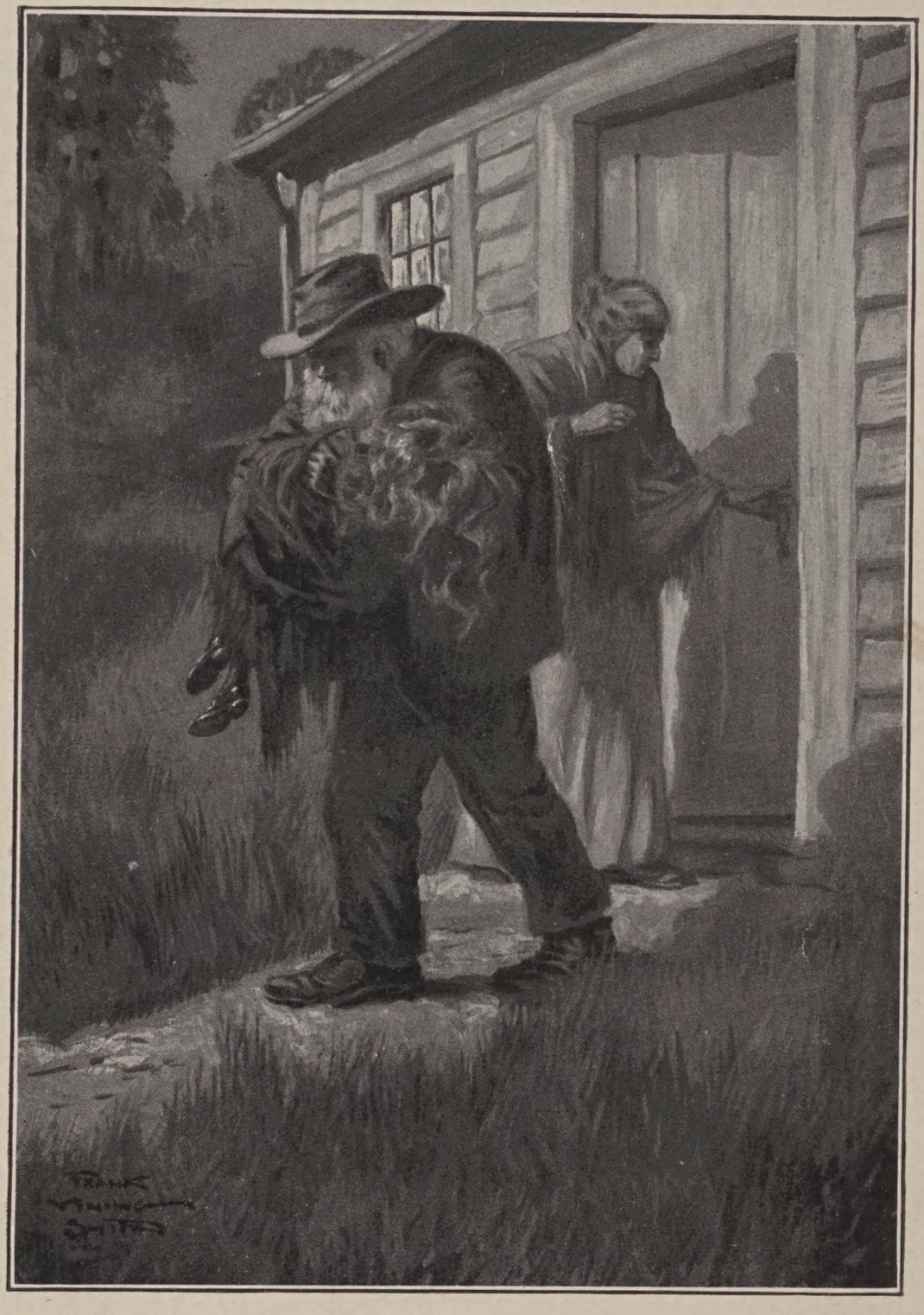
Billy just looked very knowing and said: "Wait and see."

I did not have long to wait though, for almost instantly I heard a stealthy step on the walk outside and saw Peter's face peeping in at the door. He looked at Dick lying on the floor asleep, and he muttered: "Jest what I thought, the fool has been a drinkin' again! I'll find out who this baby is, and I'll take her away from him or my name hain't Peter Overlock. That's all the' is to it, any way!"

Peter stood with his back to the door, looking at Betty with just the same light in his eyes that I had seen in Uncle Toby's, when he looked at the children; and something told me that he loved her, and would care for her in spite of Dick. It was so dark in the room that I suppose men and women could not see very

well, but I could, of course, as horses always can in the night. And it so happened that while Peter stood peering through the dark at Betty, a queer little woman crept in through the door. She came so noiselessly that I looked to find out if she had wings, on which she had fluttered in like a bird, but she wore a faded old shawl around her, so I could not see. It seemed that she could not see very well either, for when she tried so hard in the dark to look around, she couldn't make her eyes go the way she wanted them to; because they were bent in toward her nose, so that one of them looked at Betty, and the other one looked at me.

But she didn't stop to see, she just fluttered on till she bumped into Peter so hard that it took his breath away, and nearly knocked him over. He did not seem at all surprised at her being there, but she was quite startled, and cried out: "My land, Peter, why don't you look to see where you are a going?" Peter only



"THEN PETER TOOK THE BUNDLE UP IN HIS ARMS AND THEY STOLE AWAY."

smiled back in his quiet way and said: "Well, Sally, I'm sorry I scat yer, but I'm jest a thinkin' it would be pretty hard work fer a feller ter try ter go the way you'r a lookin'!" They both laughed after this, and then they began talking in a low voice as though they were afraid some one would hear them. They never dreamed that Billy and I were listening, and that their words were bringing joy to our hearts. But oh, if I could have spoken to them, I would have made them gladder still! for I could have told them who Betty was, and where Uncle Toby lived. And these were the things they wanted most to know.

After they whispered together for a long time, I saw Aunt Sally take the old shawl off her shoulders—but I couldn't see any wings—and then she stooped over and wound it around Betty very carefully, till I could not have told there was any little girl there, in the faded bundle that she made. Then Peter took the bundle up in his arms and they stole away so

still, that I could not hear a sound of them, after they left the room.

I thought that Billy would follow Betty and her new friends, or forbid them to take her away, but he was too wise, it seemed, to do either. He just trotted as far as the door with them, wagging his tail in the most polite and joyous way, and then he came over and cuddled down close beside me on the ground. I believe that my old friend, instinct, was his too, and that it told him Betty would be safe with Peter and Sally, because they were good and kind. He had no fear for her now, but he knew I still remained in Dick's hands, and he must guard me. After this he kept very close to my side, never leaving me, only for a short time each day, when he went to visit Betty at Aunt Sally's.

It was hard for me to sleep that night, because I kept smelling the juicy green grass all around me—yet so far away that I could not reach it. I had not been fed since morning and I was very hungry. I

don't know when Billy had eaten, for he said not a word, but just stretched his nose out on his paws, and made believe sleep—though he started and growled every time Dick moved.

After a long while the birds awoke and began to play, and it grew light between the boards in the roof, so I knew day had come. I am sure it must have been late when Dick opened his eyes and discovered that Betty was gone. He looked angry at first, then he laughed, and holding on to his head with both hands, as if he were afraid of losing it off, he went over and threw himself on the couch, where he lay thinking for some time.

When he worked for Uncle Toby, Dick seemed to feel that I was valuable because I learned to do things easily. This was the reason he wanted so much to own me, and it was strange to me now, that he had forgotten all about my tricks, or the money he thought they would bring him. However this might be, he never asked me to do a trick, and I never felt like try-

ing, because Uncle Toby had liked so much to see me do them, that the thought of them made me miss him more than anything else.

The days of that summer passed slowly to me, for I was kept tied nearly all the time, where I could smell my own open world outside, though it was shut away from me by a few cracked boards, which Dick called home. He was gone a good deal of the time, and then I fared poorly. Often I stood all day and all night, hitched to one of the floor beams by a short heavy rope. It was hard to lie down unless I got the rope in a certain place, and I had nothing to eat. I could feel myself failing, growing both thinner and weaker every day. And in those hours, all the dear ones came to my mind, till becoming desperate, I ran back and forward, pulling at my halter, and calling to them over and again, so loudly that I felt sure they must hear. But they never came.

Dick was very friendly with the old man who had bought black Pete, and I

fancy that when he left me so long alone, they were together, drinking out of the dark bottle. Sometimes the farmer would come and take him away, and when he came back he was always holding his head on, and the least thing from Billy or me, would provoke him to kick, strike, and abuse us most cruelly. At such times Billy never left me alone, and I was thankful indeed, to him, for his company and protection.

There were days together, though, when Dick would bring home food to the little house, where he would live quietly, eating and sleeping the time away. I must confess that during these days, he was very kind to Billy and me, often sharing his food with us, and even petting us if we were gentle enough to allow him to come near.

As the days grew cooler, and I had lived for a long while with Dick, I began to lose my horror of him, because I realized that although he could be very cruel, and though he had stolen and done many

wicked things, yet he was not all bad; for there was some love left in him, and some craving for affection,—even from Billy and me. I am sure if he had been given more kind, good friends, in his life, that he would have been different. But every thing was against him—even himself.

I used to wonder often why Dick never rode or drove me, and I longed, more than you can understand, for a run in the open air. But he always acted as though he kept me out of sight because he was afraid to have any one see me. Why this was I never could tell, unless he had done so many wrong things which he had been obliged to hide, that he had fallen into the habit of travelling on the hard side of the road, so as never to leave a foot-print behind him.

This of course made my life much more dreary than it would have been otherwise; for an animal shut up in the barn all the time, can never be happy or well.

Neither Peter, nor Aunt Sally, realized at first that Dick went away so much to

leave me alone and unfed. Peter came to the house often, but it so happened that he always found Dick at home. Had he suspected the real conditions of my life, I am sure he would have helped me. But I could not tell him!

The fact that animals do not complain, is one of the greatest reasons I believe, why their owners should be kind to them, and careful of them. I have known horses when they were suffering terribly, to work in the harness, drawing heavy loads without one word of complaint; though by and by they dropped in the road, never to rise again. And their masters had not known till it was too late.

At length during the latter part of the summer, there came a dark rainy week in which Dick, and Billy, and I, were housed together. Dick was in wretched spirits, and he rarely slept at all, day or night. Sometimes he would put on his coat and hat, but as soon as he opened the door, he closed it again with a bang, when turning back into the room, he would walk

the floor for hours, looking unhappy, and starting at every sound.

At last the rain stopped, and when the first sunbeam shone across our floor, it seemed to bring the old farmer with it, for he stepped into the room the same minute it came. Dick looked glad to see him, and in a very short time they were gone, taking Billy with them, and I was left alone.

For two days and nights I lived without food or drink. The rain had run in under the building, soaking the ground where I stood, until my feet were buried deep in the mud. I had given up pulling at my halter, because I had neither strength nor courage left, for any effort. I was standing on four wilted legs, with my eyes closed, when the door opened, and Aunt Sally suddenly fluttered into the room.

She always seemed like a little grey bird to me, she moved so swiftly, and yet so still, and there was such a bird-like look to her tiny mouth and chin. Then she wore something light, with lots of ends

to it, standing up from the crown of her head, just like a chicken with a topknot. I always loved to see her come in, but this morning she was as welcome to me as the clearest pool of water, or the tallest sweetest bunch of alfalfa blossoms, could ever have been. I felt new life at sight of her, and awoke at once.

When she came over to where I was standing, and saw my feet in the mud, and realized that I was suffering, she laid her face gently against mine, and said:

"It's a shame, Captain, a mean shame to leave you standing here alone. I believe I'll hitch you outside."

When I heard this I began to tease her, in what Uncle Toby would have called a soft little "whicker," for I was so afraid she would not understand. But she did, and as soon as she could untie my rope, she led me out into the bright pure air.

Can you imagine how I felt? I am sure there was never air so sweet as this, or pony heart so grateful.

Aunt Sally held my rope in her strong

little hands, for she intended hitching me to the lilac tree. But this was some distance from the house, and there were all sorts of sweet bits growing in my path, so how could I, hungry as I was, pass them by without a nibble? I tasted one, and another, and then I made a jump for a near-by knoll, where the grass looked greener than all the rest. Aunt Sally was not used to pony antics, and when I did this, I quite surprised her, by yanking the rope out of her hands.

Now what do you think happened? Do you imagine that a pony shut up for weeks, half fed and cared for, stood still to be caught again when he found himself free?

The last I saw of Aunt Sally that morning, she was wearing a very worried look on her face, and every little string on her cap was flying in the wind, as she headed up the road toward Peter's house, as fast as ever a person could go, who had only two legs to trot on.

As for me, the cool, great trees were

calling me into the woods, for my instinct told me that somewhere, not far away, I would find God had provided for my thirst, as well as my hunger. Running along the edge of the woods, I saw a fence, but when I got to it I found it so broken in many places, that I could easily step over it, into what seemed to be a part of somebody's pasture.

Just ahead of me was a path made by the footprints of many animals, as though it were travelled constantly. It was only natural that I should follow this path, and I very soon found myself near a running stream. I could not see it, but I heard it, and oh, the joy it brought to my homesick heart! I had not seen a brook, or river, since I left Helendale, and I was very thirsty too.

Instinct whispered to me that I would be very sure to find the water if I kept the path, and at last I was rewarded by a glimpse through the trees, of something sparkling in the sun. I was almost there, when a crackling of bushes in front of me

made me stop to listen, and I saw a creature dart across my path, and gliding through the bushes as easily as if they parted to let him through, leap into the river and swim down the stream out of sight.

The next minute I had waded into the water, and was drinking, drinking, as though I never could stop, till a voice close behind me said:

"Well, I declare, I believe it is you! I thought it was, when I passed you in the woods. But how on earth came you here?"

When I turned around, a beautiful deer was standing beside me, and I recognized him as the very one who had travelled in the car with me, when I came from Helendale. My heart went out to meet him instantly, and I would have told him of all the troubles I had endured since we parted. But he was very nervous and restless, and would not stand still long enough for me to talk. He said he was free now, free in his own beloved woods,

for he had escaped his keeper. But he was not happy, even now, for he was always conscious of being hunted by men who carried guns!

Poor soul, I pitied him, and I began to feel that my own lot was not the hardest in the world after all, for suffer as I might, no one hunted me, with the purpose of killing me for sport!

He heard a rustling of bushes in the distance, and it startled him so that he called out: "Good-bye," and with one leap into the water he was gone, and I never saw him again.

On my way home, I found black Pete standing directly across my path, to rub his neck against the trunk of a big tree. I cannot tell you how glad I was to see him, for he seemed like a part of my other life, when Betty looked at me with eyes that could see, and wound her warm little arms around my neck. How I wished I might have her again as she was in the olden days!

Pete looked sleek and well fed, and he

told me that his master was kind to him, and he hoped to live with him always. He told me too, that Dick was with his master, and that they had been shut into the house together for two or three days.

I might have stayed away from home that night, but Sally had run for Peter, who came after me, and hitched me so tight to the lilac tree, that I couldn't get away again. But I was out under the open sky, and there was plenty of grass—so I was happy.

CHAPTER XXVI

During all the weeks which had passed since Betty was carried out of the house, I had never seen her. I heard from her often through Billy, and I also heard Peter tell Dick that she was getting better every day. He said Aunt Sally was very good to her, and would cure her if anybody could. Of course this made me glad, for I longed to see her well again, and able to tell them who she was.

After Peter hitched me to the lilac tree, I stayed there another day and night, before I saw Dick coming home through the woods, with Billy walking close to his heels, as though he had been whipped; and I believe he had, else he would have come back to me long ago. Somehow his master had begun to control him, as he did me.

When Dick saw me hitched outside, he was surprised enough, and angry, too. He did not stop to unhitch me and take me with him, as I thought he would, but he went as fast as his tired legs could carry him straight past me into the house. When he came out he held a whip in his hands, that had a long cruel lash on the end of it.

I knew then what was coming, and the memory of that hour is still too painful for me to recall. I would not dwell upon it, to make sad the friends who read my story, but would rather touch it briefly just to give you a clue to the happier days that followed.

It is enough to say that I was lashed and torn with the whip, till Billy, forgetting his fear of Dick, came to my rescue. And oh, I shudder to tell you how cruelly my noble dog friend was wounded, before that quarrel ended, and Dick staggered away into the house!

I lay on the ground that night, and all the next day, too sick to eat, and too

heart-broken also, for I could hear Billy somewhere in the bushes not far away, crying with the pain in his neck. I knew he must be very feeble, or he would have come over where I was to comfort me.

At last toward noon of the second day, when I had strained my rope around the trunk of a big tree, to look for some grass which I had not nibbled, I became conscious that Billy was slowly crawling over towards me. He seemed to gain strength with moving, and I saw as he came nearer, that he had an ugly wound in his neck, close to his collar, which was pressing hard upon it and causing him great pain.

His suffering caused me pain too, when I remembered that it was all on my account. I was eager to help him, and I could see that it was hard for him to walk, so forgetting that I was hitched, I sprang forward to meet him.

I never knew how it happened that when I made that leap, the rope which had caught under one of my shoes, broke and

set me free. I believe that some kind power planned it so, for with the parting of that rope I seemed to part with my sorrow leaving all the troubles of a life-time behind me.

Billy realized what had happened at once, and I believe he formed plans too, that minute, which I was not able to understand. As for me, the thought of freedom was too good to be true, and I looked around toward the house, half expecting to see Dick stagger out and hitch me again. But no Dick appeared, and Billy gave a low bark of delight. I am sure he would have jumped all over me if he had been well, but now he only wagged his tail and started off down the road, telling me to follow him.

I did not know where he was going, but I did know that he had often guided me better without reins, than most drivers had done with them; so I walked along behind him asking no questions. It was very hard for him to walk, and every few minutes he laid down beside the road to rest,

while I nibbled the grass near him till he was ready to go on.

I found myself lame too, and quite willing to move as slowly as Billy wished. But it was not a long journey he was taking me on, as you shall see, for after we had limped up one side of a big hill and down the other, I saw just at the foot of it a small dapple-gray house, that seemed to be leaning toward us, and had spread out its lower part as though it had tried to move, but was still straining in the harness, under the weight of a tipping load. There was a tiny barn a little behind the house, with a fence around the front of it, but the door-yard was open, and a tall tree standing over the path leading to the door, was rustling its big, brown-gold leaves, in the sunshine.

When Billy saw the place he looked at me and laughed, giving a sharp joyous bark, and then he tried to go faster, as if he could not get there soon enough.

As we drew nearer the house, I saw some one rocking in a chair under the tree,

and when we turned into the yard, I recognized Aunt Sally, who was cuddling Betty close in her arms.

I wish you could have seen their faces when they looked at Billy and me! Aunt Sally knew at once that we had been hurt and were sick, and she jumped up so quickly that she lost her lap, and spilled Betty out on the ground.

And then I saw my little mistress! She stood there looking at me with the sun lighting bright sparkles in her curls, just as it used to do at Helendale, and all the roses had come back to her cheeks again, —yet she was not quite my Betty. There was still something strange in her eyes, and while she stared at me in wonder, I noticed that she held her hand to her head, and tied her face all up in little lines, as though it was very hard for her to think. Of course she knew Billy for she had never had time to forget him, and now she turned away from me, with a sad look on her face, as if she wanted to remember but could not, and laid her hand upon her

"SHE POUNDED AGAINST THE SHED DOOR AS IF SHE WANTED TO PUNISH IT FOR SOMETHING."

head. All this while Aunt Sally had fluttered around me, looking at the marks of Dick's whip left upon my flanks. Then she went over to Billy and examined his head, scolding all the time:

"My stars and garters, I never heard tell of such works as this! I saw red beef in my dreams all night last night, and I knew somethin' bad was goin' ter happen. It's a sure sign! Dear me, I wish Peter would come and take care of these poor animals. If he had only gone ter war, and done with it, he wouldn't a been thinkin' all the time about that old blue coat and big gun of his; mebby then he'd remember his neighbours oftener!"

I could see that she was growing very much excited, for she ran into the house and out again, bringing a long, heavy stick, with which she pounded against the shed door as if she wanted to punish it for something; over and over she pounded, till it seemed to be hitting the trees in the woods back of the house, every time she hit the door.

Just beyond Sally's yard there was a thin clump of willow bushes, and she had scarcely stopped pounding, when I saw Peter's blue clothes through the bushes, coming as fast as he could make his two legs cover the ground. He must have been near, and hearing her call, hurried along, thinking she was in trouble.

Billy went slowly out to meet him when he turned into the yard, and Peter knew at once that he was suffering. I saw him talking to Sally, but so low that I could not tell what he was saying, though she was not afraid to speak, for I heard her say:

"Well he's a wicked man, I tell you! and if we don't adopt his whole family, he'll kill every one of them."

"Well, well, Sally, we shall see what can be done for the little ones," was Peter's slow reply, as calling Billy to him, he stooped over and cut the collar from his neck, with a pocket knife:

"That was the first thing ter do, Sally," he said, as he picked up the heavy strap

of leather, that had been locked on Billy's neck ever since I could remember.

"Poor boy, yer'll feel better now,—but Sally, what is this?"

He was holding the collar to the light while he and Aunt Sally were studying some black letters which I could see were printed on the inside of it. And then in a voice that quivered with excitement I heard him speak Uncle Toby's name, and something about Helendale and Wisconsin.

It was hard to tell who looked the happier when they had made out the letters, Aunt Sally or Peter. They both wiped their eyes while they laughed, and Sally hugged Betty, while Peter took Billy into the house to bathe his bleeding neck.

After this, Peter came and led me away into the sunny little barn-yard, and shut the bars while he went to get me a pail of water. Nearly all that afternoon I could see Peter and Sally, sitting on the back door-steps, with their heads close together, and bending over a piece of

white paper on his knee. When he went away, toward night, I heard him call back to her cheerfully:

"We shall hear pretty soon, Sally, don't yer worry."

CHAPTER XXVII

I did not see Peter again till the night had come and gone several times, though I am sure that Aunt Sally went across the field to his house every day. Always when she came back, she stopped at the fence to pat my face or whisper a loving word in my ear. Her cheeks were very red, and there was something hurried and excited about her, which was quite unlike Aunt Sally. Peter had taken Billy home to care for his poor sick neck, and I was kept in the yard, so that we were all safe from Dick now. The dread of my past life was going away from me, for I was out under the sky, and kindness was all about me—and there was plenty to eat and drink!

While I stood here in the little barnyard, I could see plainly all that went on

in Aunt Sally's back door-yard. And every time Betty came out to play, I spoke to her in the old way, because I could not help it! At first she did not notice me, but after a little she began to lean over the fence and hold out her hand to me; and one morning when I laid my head on her shoulder, she laughed so happily that I thought she knew me—though her eyes were not quite like Betty's yet.

At last there came a cold cold night, when I was very thankful for the shelter of the shed, and the snug straw bed which Aunt Sally made for me. When morning came, it brought her with it, to open the door, and let me out into a world of glittering frost. The air was clear and cool, and if I had not been lame I should have galloped over the yard till I was tired. Everybody seemed to feel good that day, for Aunt Sally was flying around, and Betty was out trying to scrape the white off the grass with her little hands, before the sun drank it all up.

I was watching her play close by me, when I heard some one calling, and looking up, I caught sight of Peter's blue suit through the willow trees. He was walking as fast as he could, calling Aunt Sally, and waving something white in his hand, high over his head. Before he turned into the yard she was at the door, and I heard him say: "They are comin', Sally, comin' on the mornin' stage! The good Lord grant we hain't made no mistake."

I shall never live long enough to forget what followed. Peter flew around for a while helping Aunt Sally, and then I saw him go away and heard him say to her:

"I shall tell him they are comin', because if they want the little horse, I believe he belongs to Dick, and they must pay for him. It's only right they should."

He was not gone long, and when he came back I saw that a great change had come over him. He walked more slowly, and the big gun on his shoulders seemed too heavy a load for him to haul.

When the sun was high overhead, Aunt

Sally came out to feed me, and I never saw her look quite as she did then. She fluttered around more like a little bird than ever, her colours were brighter, and I am sure there were more feathers in her topknot than usual.

Aunt Sally's house was away from the main road, over which we had passed when we came from Rockland, so that very few horses went by her door. But while she was feeding me, I heard the rumbling of wheels, and a huge, yellow wagon that looked like a circus team drove into the yard. It went so close to the front door, that I could not see what happened, but I knew it was something wonderful, because Aunt Sally gave a little peep of joy, and ran to meet her visitors. Then I saw the great coach drive away, and everybody seemed to forget me, till I grew tired of nothing to do, and laid down in one corner of the yard.

I must have fallen asleep, and dreamed that I was back again at Helendale. I thought I heard my old master calling

to me, and I answered him in my sleep, so loudly that it awoke me, and I staggered to my feet. Just then I became conscious that some one was leaning over the fence, and when I opened my eyes they looked straight into the happy, loving face of Uncle Toby. His fine, tall form, was bent to hold Betty on to the top rail of the fence, and she was looking up at him, with eyes that could see — and I knew our own little girl had come back again. I thought I was still dreaming, but when he spoke my name and said: "Jinks, you brave old soldier, I'm glad to see you once again!" I knew it was really my dear master, come to claim me at last.

Then all the years of suffering rolled away from my mind, leaving but one desire, and that was to show him how glad I was to see him. His voice was stirring old memories in me, and when I saw Peter and Sally coming toward the barnyard, I trotted forward to the bars, and standing on my hind legs, held out a hand

for Uncle Toby to shake. Then I went through every one of my tricks, as I used to do, in the days when he was so proud of me. Of course I was stiff and lame, and when my tail got under my heels, it nearly tipped me over; but he understood that my efforts were all for him, and he came to me — and when he raised his face from my neck where it had rested, I saw him wiping his eyes, with the same white cloth he had used when he said good-bye to me at Helendale.

I thought a strange woman was walking across the yard with Peter and Aunt Sally, but as she drew near, I knew that she was Betty's mother. I heard Uncle Toby tell Peter that she was with him at Helendale, when his letter came, and that they started east at once. He said too, that he thought the only thing which made Betty remember, was the sound of her mother's voice. They were all standing around me, and everybody acted so happy, that it seemed good to see them, when I heard a sharp, quick bark, at the

other side of the fence, and Billy bounded around the corner, landing against Uncle Toby's back so hard that they both fell over, and rolled in the grass. Such a shout of laughter as went up, and they all began petting him, and were so glad to see him! But when they noticed the scars on his neck, and asked about them, Peter looked very sad. He bowed his head, and stood close to Uncle Toby with his hat in his hand, and I heard him say:

"I intended ter take yer ter see Dick this mornin', and let yer settle with him yerself. But I have jest come from his camp, where I left him — asleep. When the bugle calls ter wake him up, he will have jined the ranks of a better General than any he ever served before!"

Then they all turned and walked away very slowly, all saving Aunt Sally, who lingered to feed me a doughnut which she pulled out of her pocket. "Peter brought these to me fer the company," she said, "but you can have my share, Cappie, yer company too!"

When she turned to go into the house, the sun looked down to say good-night, and spread a red beam across her face, just to light up the tender smile she was leaving with me. And the gentlest, sweetest voice that ever spoke to me, whispered then: "You will remember her as long as you live, Cap, just as you see her now."

It was hard to say good-bye to Peter and Aunt Sally, but it is all over, for I am home again, home at Helendale!

I am standing on the big hill under the willow, and the wind is blowing my mane over my face, and making little ripples in the blue river. There is a flock of red leaves flying above the water, where every now and then one lights to rest, and is carried off down the stream out of my sight. Betty and Buntie are climbing the banking with their arms full of these beautiful red leaves. As I watch them coming, and listen to their merry voices, my past suffering seems a dream; and I

wonder which is true,—the hungry days and cruel blows, or the loving friends and clover blossoms of my life? But Razzle says she still believes there is a heaven for horses, and perhaps when I get there, I shall learn the truth from the dream.

The creek is full I am sure, for I hear its waters singing in the sunshine. I shall run there now, where I know Razzle is waiting for me, with her head over the bars, and her eyes closed. She says I have been a pretty good pony after all, and when she hears me coming, she will look up with her great soft eyes, and speak to me, for I have not seen her this morning, — she was tied up all night.

But I must say good-bye to you, my big and little children, who have read this story. Please remember me ever, as a pony who has been both good and bad, both sad and gay, just like your own dear selves.

The girls are almost here, and there are Boo and Billy now! I shall take Boo on my back and gallop away with him, and

Billy will run at my heels. The girls will follow us I know, and in five minutes we will join Razzle at the creek, and then we shall all be together again — Billy and Betty and Buntie and Boo, — Razzle and Captain Jinks.

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